

# Original Article: Investigating the Use of Sexual Drugs in the Effect of Group Cognitive-Behavioral Couple Therapy on Marital Relationships

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## ABSTRACT

The general purpose of the present study is to investigate the effect of the use of sexual drugs on the effect of the cognitive-behavioral group therapy couple on marital relationships. In this regard, the use of chemical drugs has a great effect. Marriage has always been recognized as the most important and the highest social ritual to achieve people's emotional needs. Marital relationship can be a source of trouble. Intimacy issues are often the root cause of failed relationships. In many cases, it is possible that the main problem of clients is mental preoccupation with intimacy, which the person expresses as a problem in close relationships or commitment in relationships. Although some couples may not specifically mention intimacy as a treatment goal, when these same couple's complete measures of marital quality, satisfaction, or adjustment, they often identify one or more components of the need for intimacy as problematic. The results showed that group couple therapy training based on cognitive-behavioral approach had a significant positive effect on couples' marital satisfaction and increased couples' marital satisfaction.

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## Introduction

The increase in divorce and marital dissatisfaction, on the one hand, and the demand of spouses to improve marital relations and increase intimacy, on the other hand, indicate the need of spouses for specialized interventions and training in the field of marital intimacy. There are several approaches for therapeutic interventions in spouses' relationships, such as communication therapy, reality therapy, emotion-oriented, psychoanalytical, psychoeducational, cognitive-behavioral, etc., each of which has provided specific methods and patterns of therapy based on their theoretical foundations. Among these, cognitive-behavioral couple therapy (CBCT) combines cognitive and behavioral therapy approaches. In CBCT, the therapist combines behavioral change strategies such as communication skills training with cognitive restructuring, and the goal is to improve the spouses' behavioral interactions and their cognitive evaluation (1-3). Considering the importance of marital satisfaction among spouses and enriching marital relationships and the effect of cognitive-behavioral interventions on these variables, in this research, an attempt is made to investigate the effectiveness of group couple therapy in a cognitive-behavioral way on enriching marital relationships. Glaser considers maintaining a successful marital relationship to be the most difficult type of maintaining a relationship and believes that almost more than half of married people can maintain their joint life for a lifetime, but among these, very few people are found who live together. to tie themselves well and happily (4-6). Conflict is inevitable in marriage and other long-term relationships. Marital relationship is especially prone to conflict. Because couples cultivate a lot of intimacy and mutual dependence, and this issue makes couples more vulnerable to each other (7-9). In a study, Case and Valerie asked 160 therapists to rate the most problematic areas of conflict between couples.

They introduced communication, unrealistic expectations from marriage and spouse, lack of intimacy and not showing interest as the most important aspects of marital problems (10). Also, Ziman (1999) stated that intimacy and dialogue are considered to be the most important pillars for all kinds of relationships, and the depth of intimacy that two people create in their relationship is related to their ability to clearly, correctly and effectively convey their thoughts and feelings, needs and desires. it depends. Learning to communicate effectively is an important step in the process of creating and increasing intimacy, followed by creating satisfaction in couples' relationships (11). Among the three components of this triangle, i.e., intimacy, passion and commitment, the intimacy component has the highest correlation with the marital satisfaction of couples (12). Thus, one of the important indicators of turmoil in a relationship is the lack of intimacy, and this factor causes interaction between couples and leads to a feeling of closeness, love and attention among them, which ultimately provides satisfaction in the marital relationship. For a group of people, an intimate relationship reaches its limit when they reveal their secret feelings towards each other, and for another group, the existence of shared positive experiences represents this issue, and for some others, this relationship means having warm and satisfying sex (13-15). Intimate relationships require the exchange of deep feelings and personal private thoughts. In this situation, couples feel safe with each other (16). On the other hand, troubled couples rarely express closeness and affection to each other on a daily basis (17).

Cognitivists believe that the existence of illogical beliefs and cognitive errors causes behavioral incompatibility and marital conflict (18). Psychologists, especially those who believe in cognitive therapy, consider cognitive distortions to be most effective in our perception of external reality. These distortions interfere not only in thoughts but also in imaginations (19), in such a way that they distance us from reality to some extent. Epstein (20) found that the amount of illogical and unrealistic beliefs about marital relationship is a strong predictor of marital

distress and negative expectations of treatment. As a result, it suggests that treatment programs to fix relationship dysfunction should be based on cognitive reconstruction of spouses.

### Investigating the use of pharmaceutical chemicals in order to enrich marital relationships

X-ID Golden Life pill is one of the best herbal supplements for enhancing male libido. This capsule does not have any dangerous side effects for the body, because plant extracts and minerals such as zinc and selenium make up the components of X-ID capsules. The most important effect of this capsule is to strengthen and increase men's sexual desire, which, along with it, improves and cures erectile power and also relieves fatigue and bruises in the body. The use of methods such as hormone therapy, the use of oral medicines such as pills and capsules, surgical implants, shock wave therapy and the use of herbal supplements can increase the strength of erection in men.

- ✓ **Hormone therapy:** injecting testosterone or applying gels to your skin to increase libido.
- ✓ **Taking all kinds of oral drugs:** Viagra, Levitra and Cialis according to the doctor's prescription.
- ✓ **Implant surgery:** placing a hand pump to strengthen erection in the genital system or prosthetic surgery and creating softness in this part.
- ✓ **The new method of shock wave therapy:** creating shock to increase blood circulation and improve erectile dysfunction.
- ✓ **Taking supplements made from herbal ingredients:** drugs to increase libido in men that must be approved by a doctor.

Arginine is one of the tonic and effective ingredients in X-ID, which in addition to strengthening sexual power in men, can easily treat premature ejaculation and erectile dysfunction. Arginine is used as a supplement to increase and produce sperm for couples.

Another effective ingredient in X-ID capsule is zinc as an important and essential element and selenium as a mineral rich in antioxidant properties that strengthens erection power in men. As we said, maca plant extract is used in the tonic ingredients of this medicine. Maca plant or Peruvian ginseng has a very high nutritional value and is used by people as a strengthening medicine. This energizing plant is suitable for all people who want to strengthen their libido. The nutritional power and effectiveness of this plant is so high that some athletes use it instead of anabolic steroids. Among all kinds of medicines and herbal supplements, Macavit M capsule is known as one of the best drugs to increase libido in men. This capsule, which is rich in vitamins, minerals and 19 effective and useful amino acids, can greatly increase the body's metabolism and produce energy in different parts of the body. Arginine can be mentioned among other ingredients in X-ID. This essential amino acid, which is present in the formulation of this capsule, increases blood circulation and opens good vessels. By increasing the blood supply to the reproductive system in men, the erection will have better quality and strength. Since the 1970s, there has been a concerted effort to apply the theory of cognitive-behavioral methods to couples (21). The cognitive-behavioral approach is a combination of cognitive-behavioral theories and the social exchange model, which considers marital problems, including intimacy, as the result of spouses' ineffective communication skills and inability to effectively resolve problems and conflicts, irrational expectations and beliefs, and negative behavioral exchanges.

In behavioral couple therapy, the therapist sets a special goal, evaluates the current patterns, and teaches new patterns such as communication skills, problem solving, exchanging ideas, determining rules and roles, and how to deal with conflict. Cognitive therapists use other than specific techniques to challenge the irrational beliefs of the couple and other family members and guide them towards a specific goal that the therapist wants (22-24). Since cognitive-behavioral couple therapy focuses the treatment on recognizing the behaviors of each spouse and is also one of the

most effective and prominent treatment models, the researcher has based his intervention approach on cognitive-behavioral couple therapy in a group setting. In fact, group couple therapy or multiple couple therapy is one of the forms of couple therapy that is usually administered in groups consisting of three to five couples (25).

In general, the fundamental principle of working group therapy is that a small group can act as a change agent and have a strong impact on those who accept its membership. Group therapy is like a meaningful and real unit, it is more than a collection of strangers and is more than the sum of its members. In other words, a group is a collection of views and insights and not individuals (26). Considering the lack of research in the field of cognitive-behavioral approach in improving marital relations, this research seeks to investigate the issue that group couple therapy in a cognitive-behavioral way can be effective in spouses' marital relations.

### **Satisfaction with marital relations**

Although marital satisfaction and its related factors have been extensively researched, this issue is still of interest to researchers. This breadth of research shows the importance of marital satisfaction. The reason for the wide range of research conducted on marital satisfaction is due to its importance in personal and family health, as well as its benefits to the society, prevention of social crimes and prevention and reduction of divorce are the social benefits of marital satisfaction (27-29). In the 90s, scientific studies on marital satisfaction attracted a lot of attention. Compared to the scientific findings of the last decade, in the 90s, a large number of studies were devoted to different aspects of marital satisfaction (30). Understanding the quality and value of marriage is a means to understand its effects on all processes inside and outside the family. The spiritual and logical reasons for studying the details of marital satisfaction are to understand its centrality in the health of the family and individuals. Its importance for the society while

forming successful marriages, desisting from crime and the need to expand experimental interventions for couples in order to prevent or reduce marital pressures to divorce. In the 80s and 90s, researchers continued the topic of marital satisfaction with more emphasis on aspects of marital interactions that are less tangible and visible. Also, he paid more attention to the general patterns of couples' interactions and its social dimensions, which had been neglected, and marital violence (Nazari, 2007). Factors that affect marital satisfaction are different in different cultures. For example, Camus (1993) showed in his research that, while in Japan, husband's income is one of the factors affecting marital satisfaction, in America this factor is not so important (31). Ellis (1989) believes that there are different ways to define marital satisfaction, one of the best definitions is Hawkins (1989), but marital satisfaction is the objective feelings of satisfaction, satisfaction and pleasure experienced by the husband and wife when all aspects of the marriage they consider, knows. Satisfaction is an attitudinal variable and therefore it is considered an individual characteristic of husband and wife. According to the above definition, marital satisfaction is actually a positive and enjoyable attitude that a husband and wife have about different aspects of their marriage, and marital dissatisfaction is actually a negative and unpleasant attitude towards various aspects of marital relations (32). Winch considers marital satisfaction to be the compatibility between the existing situation and the expected situation. According to this definition, marital satisfaction exists when a person's current situation in marital relations is in line with expectations.

### **Satisfaction in the family and factors affecting it**

Obviously, marriage is the first emotional and legal commitment made in adulthood. Choosing a spouse and concluding a marriage contract is considered a turning point in a person's growth and development. What are the main reasons people get married? It seems that there are three main reasons for marriage in today's society.

1- Love.

2- Companionship.

3- Fulfillment of expectations.

The most common explanation given as the reason for marriage is love. Obviously, love means very different things to different people. In general, love refers to a set of deep positive feelings directed towards another person. In order for married life to lead to satisfaction, these deep feelings must be declared and an appropriate response received from the other party. People also marry for companionship. Love for companionship is the affection we feel for people with whom we are deeply connected in our lives. This is love based on shared experience. A love in which we know our partner is always there for us, a love in which we know we are always accepted for who we are. Today's couples also marry with the aim of fulfilling their expectations [33].

Recognizing expectations, expressing them and trying to fulfill them in moderation is what brings satisfaction in marital relationships. People expect certain benefits from their spouses in particular and from marriage in general. More importantly, in the current industrial, technical and egalitarian society, the wife has a deeper meaning of expectation in mind. They are not satisfied with the role of housekeeping or family breadwinner and do not accept or expect anything less than perfection. This desirable perfection is based on a naive feeling of happiness and contentment, and in general, it can be said that many false beliefs have been accepted in the present age. Couples have accepted the idea that marriage satisfies every psychological need, and these ideas are the way to marital frustration. The expectation of always being happy, meeting needs and being supported and approved are among these beliefs. Being happy as an individual or as a couple consistently throughout your life is hard work.

No one is happy all the time and it is normal for couples to have periods of unhappiness, conflict or pressure. The image that can be presented of

marriage is continuous conjugal happiness and bliss. The fact is that marriage does not make a person happy, keep him happy, or help him get away from hardship. Definitely, someone whose goal in marriage is to be always happy is doomed to failure. Agreement in values is related to marital satisfaction. In the sense that successful couples own their life system. The study of marriages that can be evaluated indicates that different patterns are exhibited in the successful functioning of marriages (34). There is no single method for each person in order to have a happy married life, but by following the main elements, it becomes clear that although the patterns are diverse, there are common rules.

#### **Some of the common rules observed in happy marriages with diverse functional patterns are:**

1- Spouses respect each other with satisfaction in a successful, durable and harmonious married life. Each spouse finds some respectable qualities or abilities in the other, such as being a good wife, providing for expenses, having artistic flair, etc. The greater the mutual respect, the more satisfying the married life will be. These spouses show their approval and appreciation for their spouse and consistently do and say things that show their affection, love, and respect for each other and choose actions that support and affirm the goals of their marriage.

2- Spouses are tolerant towards each other. They understand that there is a possibility of being deceived or making a mistake. They see humans as vulnerable, and in this way, they can accept the shortcomings of others. They take responsibility for their behavior and self-esteem individually and do not expect their partner to be responsible for keeping them happy. For this reason, they avoid blaming and criticizing each other and instead affirm what is right about their spouse.

3- Spouses share efforts based on mutual trust. Joint efforts are based on the mutual trust of couples with a stable and satisfactory married life, and they are given the opportunity to spend



time, energy, desire and confidence to engage in activities and side jobs outside of the marital environment. They are free to enjoy not only each other, but anything and anyone else that may interest them individually or as a pair.

4- In a marital relationship with a sense of cooperation and participation, it is not possible for a man and a woman to always agree with each other, but they can easily express their disagreement and this will be accepted and they will look for a solution together. Both should be approved (Nazari,2017).

### Effective factors in consolidating marital relations

Winch (35) proposed eight criteria for marital success, which are: stability, social expectations, personality development, companionship, happiness, satisfaction, compatibility and integrity. Of course, many factors can be effective in marital satisfaction, and everyone expresses factors for marital satisfaction according to their own attitude or the results of their research.

**1- Intimacy:** Positive feelings at the beginning of marriage can eventually turn into rational and logical love. A husband can say "I love you" and a wife can enjoy hearing it. Because affection and mutual attraction are tied together in the fabric of intimacy, loyalty, trust and friendship and it establishes a stronger and deeper love (36).

**2- Respecting the wife:** Tajik Ismaili (1998) writes about the roles of the husband, a man should respect his wife, especially in the presence of others. This respect should be accompanied by sincerity and kindness. Therefore, a woman needs to receive love and respect from her husband, especially when they are in the presence of friends and acquaintances. This makes a woman feel proud of having a husband, and this feeling increases her enthusiasm for married life and her readiness to forgive and tolerate possible deprivations and hardships.

**3- Establishing social relations:** we should not neglect the great importance of communication in the group. Communication makes this group that interacts together to achieve common goals, find unity, and the reason for the need to communicate between group members is the existence of external and internal problems and obstacles (37). Markowski and Greenwood concluded that there is a positive relationship between social adjustment and marital adjustment. This means that people who are compatible and successful in their married life will also be compatible and successful in their social relationships.

**4- Economic and social issues:** Nawabnejad (1998) states that family experts recommend that boys and girls be similar in terms of class and socio-economic status in order to experience more compatibility together. Issues related to income and expenses also lead to differences between husband and wife. In the field of income and expenditure, we often deal with all kinds of mental preoccupations regarding fairness, control and competition and other symbolic meanings that harm joint activities. Many couples disagree on how to pay expenses.

**5- Communication with relatives and surrounding people:** the emotional attachments of husband and wife to their families can have a negative impact on marital relations. In many cases, the husband and wife's high attention to their parents provides the means to care for each other. Relatives sometimes create problems for their married children. Like their children, they suffer from feelings of injustice, exaggerated generalizations, and symbolic thinking (38). If parents don't even interfere outwardly, they are indirectly effective in their child's life, because the husband and wife's thoughts and their personalities are formed under the influence of their parents' thoughts, and they both treat each other the same way they got from their parents.

**6- Value, ideological and religious issues:** sometimes marriage faces problems due to the husband and wife's ignorance of their mental

abilities or due to their knowledge of each other's value systems and moral adherences. After the husband and wife have come to the conclusion that they don't have much in common, the bonds of their married life are weakened, they may collapse. Similarity between husband and wife in terms of religion causes the attraction and dependence of the husband and wife more and more and the stability of their marital bond, and on the contrary, dissimilarity is the source of family conflicts. Is. According to Wood, the less homogeneity between two spouses in terms of religion and race, the greater their differences and conflicts. In addition to creating differences between husband and wife, religious disharmony also creates many problems in their relationship with their spouse's parents (3).

**7- Interests and way of thinking:** Ellis (38) has discussed the role of thinking in marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The agreement between men and women plays a major role in various issues of life, and this agreement is affected by the way of thinking and interests of both, and couples reach an agreement in the fields of freedom of people in the family, commitment of children, education and upbringing of children, intervention of others, etc. arrive logically. This agreement is especially important regarding how to raise children. In areas such as how to spend free time such as going to the cinema, participating in religious gatherings, reading books, listening to music and radio, etc., a relative agreement should also be reached. If one of the couples shows prejudice without considering the interests of the other party, it will lead to discouragement and failure of the other party. Having an agreement on the important issues of life is one of the issues that play a role in the success and satisfaction of married life.

**8- Personality:** Bloom and Mehrabian (37) conducted a study on 166 couples aged 20 to 85 years. In this research, the participants were divided into groups with domineering, agreeable, and stimulating temperaments using a marital satisfaction scale. The findings show that people with a more pleasant and dominant temperament tend to have happier marriages.

Also, people who chose a spouse with a more pleasant temperament were happier in their marriages. In 1984, Stenberg and Kraucek conducted a study based on the scale of loving. According to the results of this study, these researchers defined love as follows: Love is an emotional feeling, recognition and motivation that is expressed based on communication, participation, mutual support. Then in 1986, he proposed the love triangle theory. According to this theory, love has three dimensions:

- ✓ Intimacy
- ✓ lust
- ✓ A decision or commitment.

**Newman and Newman (1991) believe that marital satisfaction depends on the following factors:**

- ✓ High level of education.
- ✓ High economic and social base.
- ✓ Similarity of interests, intelligence and personality of couples.
- ✓ Early or later stages of family life.
- ✓ Harmony and harmony of sexual relations.
- ✓ Later marriage for women.

**A study of the belief systems and interaction patterns of happy couples shows that they have certain characteristics (Carr, 2004), which include:**

- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Acceptance of more positive interactions compared to negative interactions.
- ✓ Focusing conflicts on specific issues.
- ✓ Repairing broken relationships.

- ✓ Reasonable dealing with different styles of female and male conversation.
- ✓ Paying attention to intimacy and power needs.

**Rice (1991) believes that healthy functioning couples and families have appropriate communication patterns as follows:**

- ✓ They speak frankly and clearly, they are not dry and flexible in discussions, while they do not see disorder and chaos in them.
- ✓ They try to get along with each other rather than showing resentment and can express themselves without hurting others.
- ✓ They are friendly and express their disagreement without disturbing others.
- ✓ These families use a variety of emotions and can express their happiness or sadness to each other.
- ✓ They joke and laugh at each other.

Family life cycle is one of the areas that has been researched regarding marital satisfaction. Peterson (1990) showed in his research that the pattern of marital satisfaction is U-shaped. In the early years of married life, marital satisfaction decreases and later in the last years of married life, marital satisfaction increases, but Van Laningham, Johnson and Amato (2000) showed in their research that marital satisfaction decreases along the way of the marital relationship (Van Krusik, 2004). The research of Sabatelli and Bartel-Haring (2003) showed that issues related to the family life cycle and marital satisfaction do not start with the nuclear family, but with the main family (father) and in fact the experiences of the main family have a great impact on the level of marital satisfaction (2).

**Cognitive-behavioral couple therapy approach**

Cognitive-behavioral couple therapy (CBCT) has been developed in the last decade as a powerful and effective approach in the field of communication problems (5). Albert Ellis for the first time pointed out the possibility of using cognitive-behavioral couple therapy and its important role in recognizing marriage problems. According to Ellis, communication dysfunction occurs when the parties have unrealistic beliefs about their relationships and give very negative evaluations of the source of their dissatisfaction (9). In the 1960s-1970s, behavior therapists used the principles of learning theory to address problematic behaviors of adults and children. Many behavioral principles and methods used in individual therapy. Later it was applied to unhappy couples and then to families. For example, Stewart (1969), Lieberman (1970), and Dice, Hoopes, and Patterson (1973) used social exchange theory and agent learning principles to facilitate signature interactions of troubled couples and families. This work led the subsequent research of the pair of therapists to identify the importance of the intervention of cognitive factors and behavioral interaction patterns (10). Before presenting the main theories of family therapy, it was suggested that cognitions can be used as a sub-section of behavioral therapy, but in the 1980s, cognitive factors became the main focus of the development of research and therapy resources for couples and were more direct and structured than what was present in other theoretical approaches of couple therapy were included in the therapy. With the introduction of cognitive distortions and false perceptions in the treatment of couples, therapists' attention was directed to the inferences and beliefs of the parties towards each other, and the possible use of these beliefs to find a way to get rid of relational impasses was considered (11).

Cognitive assessment and intervention methods were borrowed from individual therapy and adapted for use with couples. Like individual therapy, communication and problem-solving interventions are also used to strengthen couples' ability to evaluate and change problematic cognitions (12). Clinical evaluation methods in cognitive-behavioral couple therapy,



individual and joint interviews with couples, questionnaires filled by individuals themselves, and observation of couples' interaction by therapists, are the three main methods of clinical evaluation.

### Therapeutic interventions for cognitive changes

Cognitive therapy has proven that husband and wife can avoid negative results by adopting a humbler behavior and revising unnecessary mind reading and by examining more perceptions and by considering other explanations for what their partner does. Have a more rational behavior. The essence of cognitive therapy in married life is the examination of unrealistic expectations and destructive attitudes, unnecessary negative justifications and illogical conclusions.

Cognitive therapy has created more logical relationships between families by emphasizing the correct communication between husband and wife and by correcting the way they draw conclusions in each other's exchange by reducing the intensity of hostility (5). Therapists suggest that couples' cognitive therapy should assess beliefs about relationships in general and beliefs or cognitions about relationships specifically. Cognitive therapists will try to help people question more general patterns. Therapists help couples discover their constructive thoughts and replace them with destructive thoughts and patterns. Therapists encourage couples to reassess their rational or irrational thoughts. This is done by asking clients to report automatic thoughts that occur when the person is being intimate (19). In fact, the necessary condition to balance the distorted and extreme cognitions of spouses is to increase the level of recognition of their spontaneous thoughts.

With the concept of spontaneous thoughts, i.e., thoughts that come to the person's mind by themselves, the therapist can show the thought patterns that are associated with emotional and negative responses during several sessions with the guidance of the person. At this stage, the

therapists ask the therapist to take a small notebook with them when they feel distress or conflicts, and note down their perceptions in their office at the same moment. These notes include the description of spontaneous thoughts along with the resulting emotional and behavioral responses as well as the responses of family members.

At the beginning of daily recording of dysfunctional thoughts, it is used to identify and adjust spontaneous thoughts in the recognition of individual therapy, and based on that, the therapist can show clients how spontaneous thoughts are related to emotional and behavioral responses. In the following, they will come to the conclusion that these answers can be controlled by examining the principles of cognitions related to the answers. In this way, therapists encourage couples to take responsibility for their answers. An essential exercise for each couple is to review and study the notebook to identify specific relationships between thoughts, feelings, and behavior. At this stage, the therapist asks the couples to look for alternative cognitions that can produce common emotional and behavioral responses to the situation (16).

### Therapeutic techniques

#### 1- Determining cognitive errors and naming them:

Because cognitive errors are an essential part of couples therapy and education, it is essential that couples learn not only to recognize these errors, but also to explain them. The purpose of these guided cognitive exercises is to understand that couples' thoughts can be destructive and lead to incorrect information and to help them correct these thoughts. This conscious interpretation can make the effects of thoughts towards spouses clearer for each couple.

#### 2- Connecting emotions with your thoughts:

The main goal of this stage is to recognize the unpleasant emotional reaction, connect it with an incident, and then find a relationship that connects them.

**3- Use of visualization and role-playing methods:** When getting to know thoughts and beliefs, couples may have difficulty remembering information. Using the method of visualization and role playing can be useful for recognizing spontaneous feelings and thoughts.

**4- Challenging spontaneous thoughts and reframing thoughts:** The therapist helped the couple by guiding the couple in identifying their spontaneous thoughts in order to examine and recognize cognitive errors and label and name them and to replace these thoughts with positive thoughts and actions. (17). Discussions have a special place in couple's therapy. The clients' irrational beliefs can be debated while familiarizing them with the factors that cause the formation of irrational thoughts (2).

### Therapeutic interventions to improve behavioral skills

**Cognitive-behavioral therapists also use written and verbal instructions, teaching to facilitate effective problem-solving skills, modeling, and behavioral practice. The main stages of problem-solving skills are:**

- ✓ Achieving a clear and specific definition of the problem based on behaviors that may occur or not?
- ✓ Provide specific behavioral solutions to the problem without attacking family members' beliefs.
- ✓ Evaluating and reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of each proposed solution.
- ✓ Choosing a solution that seems to be more practical and attractive and acceptable to all family members involved in the problem.
- ✓ Agreement on the evaluation trial period.
- ✓ Its effectiveness to implement the selected solution.
- ✓ Practice and homework to learn skills.

**Below is a set of steps taken from Epstein and Shel Singer (1996). These steps can be used as guidelines for problem solving with families and couples:**

- 1- Define the problem in a specific behavioral way. Compare people's understanding of the problem and arrive at a suitable description of the problem.
- 2- Provide a set of possible solutions.
- 3- Check and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each solution.
- 4- Choose a practical and possible solution.
- 5- Implement the selected solution and check and evaluate its effectiveness.

These steps provide the context to be strategically assigned as homework. The therapist repeatedly reviews the process and its consequences together with the couple or family based on everyday issues.

### Behavioral exchange agreements

Behavioral exchange agreements are a necessary part of cognitive behavioral therapy. Contracts for exchanging desirable behaviors play an important role in reducing family tensions. In addition, therapists should avoid that the behavioral exchange of a family member is conditional on the behavior of another member. Therefore, the goal of behavioral exchange agreements is for each person to identify and perform certain behaviors that lead to self-improvement, regardless of what the other member does. The main challenge facing therapists is to encourage family members, avoid rituals, and not wait for the other to behave positively. Providing brief educational tips about dealing, for example, in troubled relationships, the fact that a person can only have control over his own actions, the importance of committing a person to improve the atmosphere and environment of the family, are some interventions that reduce people's

reluctance in order to create the first positive cooperation.

### Courage

Social skill training, which is often used in family therapy, is the skill of learning courage, and shy and frightened behaviors are often observed in the family.

These behaviors make them avoid talking to each other, or in some cases, the behaviors become extremely aggressive. This may be one of the areas that cause major problems in relationships. When this is a major problem in interactions, it is essential to receive formal training in recognizing the difference between assertive and aggressive responses. Spouses and family members are asked to practice these three types of aggressive, assertive and passive responses in communication with each other. This exercise helps them recognize the benefits of assertive behavior in achieving healthy interactions.

The therapist can use role-playing techniques during treatment sessions and ask people to participate in a training program, or watch training tapes related to assertiveness. Especially educational tapes that include the context of couple and family interactions. Spouses and family members are asked to observe their own gender patterns in their age range. This can be very helpful in showing the difference between bold, passive and aggressive behaviors. You should keep cultural issues in mind when proposing a dare. Especially in relation to couples and families from diverse cultural backgrounds. For example, families that belong to a culture that prohibits women from talking to their husbands.

### Behavioral practice

After training the skills and receiving feedback from the therapist, couples and family members should practice specific skills. This is done first in the treatment session through verbal training and modeling. These training sessions are traditionally called behavioral training, where

the treatment starts in the session and is gradually extended to the person's living environment.

Behavioral training is the most essential part of treatment sequences. Because it provides feedback to the therapist in the next session whether couples and family members have understood what has been taught and can demonstrate in their behavior what needs to be implemented. In addition, actual practice motivates change and contributes to the permanent stability of the change outcome. Behavioral training can be considered as a formative process in which both therapists and spouses or family members learn to accept new ways of interacting. The initial part of the practice that takes place in the therapy session is because their feedback can be provided on what they are demonstrating and recommendations can be made collaboratively to improve the practice and how to apply it to the situation.

### Therapeutic interventions to improve communication skills

Communication allows couples to discuss and solve problems at a mature level and exchange important information. People who can't bring differences to an agreement are stuck in the cycle of unfulfilled needs for years of life and this cycle repeats regularly, but they support each other with appropriate communication lines and can be a mirror that reflects problems. Many empirical evidences show that couples with problems in expressing their thoughts and feelings and in listening and problem-solving skills use a variety of negative and ineffective communication patterns (26).

The expression of thoughts, feelings and self-awareness and the correct use of words in expressing one's personal experiences are created under factors such as various threats or inability to self-restraint and ultimately weakness in communication due to various processes.

Inconsistent learning patterns during the socialization period of a person in the early family lead to cognitive performance defects, as well as various psychological injuries, depression and bitter experiences of past relationships that make a person prone to expressing stressful responses when interacting with other people, play a significant role in this process. Research has shown that spouses who have a negative relationship with each other may use constructive skills in relation to others. This shows that chronic disruption in close relationships does not directly hinder the establishment of positive relationships (27).

### Group couples therapy

Human mental health depends on group relationships. Humans benefit psychologically from their relationships with others. A person who participates in a social group and enjoys it, has actually participated in an informal psychological group (30). The overall goal of group couples therapy is to increase people's awareness of themselves and others and to help them clarify the changes they wish to achieve in life and to provide the necessary tools to make these changes through interaction with others in a safe environment and Adopters get the opportunity to experience new behaviors and receive honest feedback from others about the effects of their behavior.

As a result, couples get an opportunity to learn how to treat their spouses. The logic of these groups is that the support and challenge they provide allows couples to have an honest self-assessment and identify specific ways to change their thinking, emotional and behavioral patterns (31). The main goals in this group are to help couples develop more positive attitudes and communication skills, facilitate behavior change, and transfer newly acquired skills and learned behaviors to their spouses. Couples in the group are faced with the fact that problems are not unique and that conflict is part of life. Compromise and behavior are essential in life and couples need training to find the best way to communicate with each other (32).

The technical literature related to group therapy suggests that couples identify with the therapist and other group members in this method. Couples enjoy a higher level of trust and cohesion in the group environment than when they go to the therapist individually. They also interact with each other in a free and direct way. Eagerness to take risks about threatening subjects and introduce oneself to others. The conflict between the couple can be identified in the group and the therapist can deal with it in a direct and effective way. Exposure occurs in such a way that labeling of others is avoided, and thus couples freely accept and reflect on non-defensiveness in a non-defensive way. The desire of couples to do homework and achieve the desired behavioral changes is more than individual sessions. Spouses in these sessions feel supported to change and are willing to take the risk of implementing new behaviors and hope that they can actually change their behavior if they want to. They do not feel helpless (33). Couples learn valuable issues in the group and can experience the creation of intimacy and marital satisfaction.

### Facilities for group couple therapy

- 1- With the support of a support group, exploring the problems, concerns and compromise needs and evolution of the couple is done.
- 2- The group provides the opportunity to change feelings.
- 3- The experience of natural and positive relationships is created in the group.
- 4- Acquiring responsibility towards themselves and others is provided for spouses, and in fact, becoming a member of group counseling means accepting responsibility (12).

In fact, in cognitive-behavioral couple therapy, role performance is accompanied by social reinforcement and feedback, and homework is planned for home.

Other techniques such as discussing types of cognitions, designing a graded work program, testing various types of specific behavioral exercises that may occur in social interactions are also used in the same way (34). Examining old problems, finding new solutions inside and outside the therapy session is an important aspect of this type of group therapy (3).

The therapist creates the predicted changes in the spouses with special therapeutic interventions of the group and awareness of the dynamics of the group, relying on the methods of managing and dealing with individual problems and applying cognitive-behavioral couple therapy techniques.

### Background research

There have been many researches in the field of intimacy and the factors affecting it in Iran and other countries, which show the fact that having intimacy among married couples is one of the important factors in creating a stable marriage (6) and avoiding establishing Intimate relationships are one of the factors that will cause failure in family life (14), several examples of which are given below.

Drigatas and Raspalt (1992) showed that if important needs such as intimacy are not met, it has a negative effect on relationships. In their study of college romantic relationships, they examined five different needs (intimacy, sexual relations, companionship, emotional involvement, and intellectual involvement) and their relationship to lasting relationship decisions. They found that the degree of satisfaction of a person's important needs in a current relationship compared to the degree of satisfaction in an alternating relationship was significantly different between those who remained in the relationship and those who voluntarily ended it.

In research conducted by Gordon and Durana (1996), the effect of bonding and emotional drain was measured among couples. The results showed that the practical application of intimate communication skills between couples increases

the satisfaction of married life in personality dimensions.

In another study, Gordon and Durana (1998) studied and proved the effect of strengthening and maintaining intimate relationships between couples, and 76% of couples in this class experienced important benefits in relation to this educational workshop, and in the follow-up phase of this research, agreement and personality compatibility and they showed empathy.

Hickmon, Protynsky, and Singh (1997) investigated the effectiveness of a marital enrichment program in increasing the intimacy of married couples. The responses of the participants in the Waring Intimacy Questionnaire, the change of direction scale, indicated the effectiveness of both of these programs. The results showed that this program was able to significantly increase the satisfaction of married life in couples.

Laurencia and Feldman (1998) showed that the feeling of understanding and being understood between spouses, such as understanding, accepting, confirming, paying attention, and caring for the spouse, helps to predict intimacy, along with the openness and responsiveness of the spouse in response to the spouse's openness. Therefore, couples' mutual responses and couples' openness in relation to themselves is an important predictor of couples' satisfaction with married life and conflict resolution.

Larson, Hammond and Harper (1998) showed that the perception of equality affects marital relationships. The results showed that women's perception of intimate relationships is greatly affected by their perception of equality. As a result, the existence of inequality in women affects the intimacy and satisfaction of married life, while it is not the case in men.

Heller and Wood (1988) in the study of gender differences in the level of intimacy and the accuracy of predicting the intimacy of spouses showed that women showed a higher level of intimacy and predicted their spouse's feelings better than men. These results showed that



women and men may experience and feel intimacy in different ways.

Valihan (2000) researched the effect of a marriage enrichment program on changing the views of couples about intimacy and sex. 46 couples participated in the workshop and completed the Olson Self-Assessment of Intimacy and the Waring Intimacy and Sexuality Assessment questionnaire (29). The results showed that after the sessions, the couples participating in this workshop evaluated their intimate communication better than before, and reported satisfactory sexual relations.

The research of Halford Saunders and Behrens (2001) on 83 couples showed that the couples who were at high risk and received training showed much higher marital satisfaction than the couples in the control group, especially in the dimensions of personality and financial management.

Mirgan and Cordova (2007) showed that having emotional skills affects marital satisfaction and intimacy among couples and also that women have more emotional skills than men. This study provides further support for the theory that emotional skills play an important role in the development and maintenance of marital health. Because the role of such skills is in the stability of intimacy stages. In addition, the results show that having emotional skills plays an important role in resolving conflicts and understanding the personality of conflict resolution among couples.

Averbeck, Kemp, and Ingles (2007) examined the components of love in a romantic relationship. The research sample was 435 people. They found that:

- 1- There is a positive relationship between intimacy and relationship satisfaction.
- 2- There is a positive relationship between lust and relationship satisfaction.
- 3- There is a positive relationship between commitment and relationship satisfaction.

4- There is a positive relationship between all three components of love, i.e., intimacy, lust, commitment and the continuation of a romantic relationship.

Michel, Castellani, Harrington, Joseph, Das, and Schneider (2008) showed that openness and empathy are components of intimacy. In men, openness and empathy are the components that predict intimacy, while in women, intimacy is predicted by their partner's openness and empathy. Openness and empathy seem to be the most important determinants of intimate behavior with a spouse, but the way they are affected by intimacy is influenced by gender differences.

Ellis (1977) showed that many of the psychological problems of people are caused by their distorted and illogical perception, that is, what causes most problems and disturbances in marital relationships, not stimuli and not external events, but the way of thinking and beliefs. Their irrationality is towards the events.

Rasta Muller and Robbins (1989) showed that five types of cognitive processes including selective attention, attributions, expectations, assumptions and criteria, that is, the beliefs that each person has in mind about marriage and intimate relationships, are related to satisfaction and the level of intimacy.

Hamamsi (2006) also showed in his research under the title of impaired communication beliefs in marital conflict that destructive communication beliefs have a positive correlation with the frequency of marital conflicts and the level of tension in these conflicts.

Storey, Berg, Smith, Kelly, et al. (2007) found in a study that collaborative problem solving was more likely to be used by older couples with more optimistic cognitive functioning. They also showed that older husbands and their wives rated their spouse's behavior more positively during nonconsensual interactions than an independent observer would, suggesting that older adults are biased toward the positive aspects of their relationships.

Stanford 2006, in a study called communication during marital conflict, when couples change their evaluations, their behavior changes, showed that the variability between individuals in cognitive evaluation predicts the variability of individuals in communication behavior during conflict.

Lawrenson (1993) also investigates irrational beliefs about choosing a spouse during research and concludes that cognitive therapy and adjustment of irrational beliefs should be an important element for premarital counseling and marital satisfaction.

In the field of modifying behaviors and communication patterns in the cognitive-behavioral approach, Gutman and his colleagues believe that intimate relationships between spouses are related to communication skills, people's attention to issues from the spouse's point of view, the ability to empathize with what the spouse has experienced, and being sensitive and aware of It depends on his needs.

In another study about communication problems, Ockham (1992) shows that communication problems and problems are the main source of interpersonal problems and that most marital problems are caused by misunderstanding and ineffective communication.

Odon and Crouch (1996) have also stated that the core of treating marital problems is improving communication skills.

Bernstein's estimates (2004) have shown that 90% of troubled couples have mentioned communication problems as an important factor in their relationships.

Regarding the role of beliefs and knowledge in marital relationships, the results of Zarei's research (2005) showed that in incompatible couples, there are more factors of misunderstanding, illogical and absolutist thinking than other factors.

In another research titled the relationship between illogical thoughts and attachment

patterns with marital compatibility, the findings have shown that the presence of illogical thoughts is effective in most intimate relationships and consequently in marital compatibility (Momenzadeh, 2014).

In another worthy research (2015) which was conducted with the aim of evaluating the role and specific communication beliefs and expectations in the level of marital satisfaction on 50 Iranian couples living in Australia and Canada, the results clarify that people with irrational thinking significantly They have lower marital satisfaction.

Adib Rad et al. (2013) also found that the amount of emotional irrational beliefs is higher among couples who have applied for divorce than normal couples.

In the field of deterministic thinking, Younesi (2013), Zarei (2015) found that reducing deterministic thinking in couples, along with other cognitive techniques, increases satisfaction and reduces marital conflicts.

Younesi and Bahrami (2018) in their research titled predicting marital satisfaction with deterministic thinking of Tehrani couples found that the four main factors of this concept can significantly predict marital satisfaction in the cognitive field.

## Conclusion

The general purpose of the current research is to investigate the effect of group cognitive-behavioral couple therapy on the fruitfulness of couples' marital relationships. In comparative comparison with previous researches and researches, the results of this research with parts of the researches and findings of internal researchers such as Erfani and Akbari (1999), Etamadi (2005), Nazari (2005), Etamadi (2005), Olya et al. (2006), Khamse (2008), Mohvadi (2008), Taftani (2009) and Purserdar (2010) and others such as Valihan (2000), Halford Saunders and Behrens (2001), Jacobski et al. (2004) are in line with their findings. has it. The mentioned researchers have reported in the

results of their research and findings that group trainings and interventions such as cognitive-behavioral couple training have had an effect on the level of compatibility and marital satisfaction of couples. Also, it has had a significant positive effect on issues and behaviors such as creating and increasing the intimacy of couples and even with the method of enriching the relationship between people on their social adaptation. In addition, the group cognitive-behavioral couple therapy approach is able to affect other issues and components. For example, it is effective in increasing intimacy and reducing the deterministic thinking of couples, and therefore it plays an important role in creating intimacy and improving marital relations. Also, in their results, they have pointed out that even these interventions can have fruitful results in marital satisfaction and fruitfulness of these relationships. Therefore, it can indirectly improve the general health level of trained people and have a significant effect on increasing the mental health of these people. Valihan (2000) researched the effect of a marriage enrichment program on changing the views of couples about intimacy and sex. The results showed that the studied couples evaluated their intimate communication better than before, reported satisfactory sexual relations. The research of Halford Saunders and Behrens (2001) also showed that couples who were at high risk and received training showed much higher marital satisfaction than couples in the control group, especially in terms of personality and financial management. Jakubski et al. (2004) show that intimate communication skills program training can lead to less anxiety, increased marital adjustment, satisfaction, and increased personality understanding between couples. Also, the results of Erfani and Akbari's research (1999) in the field of investigating the problems related to the intimacy of couples and the effect of treatment of communication problems showed that the treatment of relationships can solve the problems related to the intimacy of couples and the problems related to lack of agreement, love, affection and commitment and personality compatibility of couples. improve the results of Etamadi's research (2014) in the field of investigating the effect of cognitive-behavioral

couple therapy on increasing the intimacy of couples showed that cognitive-behavioral training increased the level of emotional, intellectual, sexual and physical intimacy of couples. The results of Etamadi's research (2014) titled the effect of couples therapy using imago therapy on increasing the intimacy of couples showed that education will play a very important role in improving the intimacy and satisfaction of couples with married life, especially in relational personality dimensions. The results of Olya et al.'s research (2015) titled the effect of marital life enrichment education on increasing the intimacy of couples showed that the education of the components of marital life will play a very important role in increasing the intimacy of couples and ultimately enriching married life. The results of Khamisa's research (2017) titled the investigation of gender differences between different dimensions of intimacy showed that gender differences will play an important role on the level of intimacy between couples. The results of Mohadi's research (2008) titled the effect of education on the dimensions of intimacy on increasing intimacy showed that education will play a very important role in increasing the level of marital satisfaction, especially in the aspect of marriage and children in couples. The results of a proof-of-concept research (2018) titled the effectiveness of the cognitive-behavioral couple therapy approach on increasing intimacy and reducing the deterministic thinking of couples showed that this approach plays an important role in creating intimacy and improving marital relationships. The results of Porsardar's research (2009) examined the effect of intimacy training on increasing marital satisfaction and showed that this educational program has fruitful results in marital satisfaction and enriching these relationships. In general, research results in Iran and other countries have determined the relationship between cognitive processes and marital relationships. Beliefs, expectations, impressions and destructive and illogical documents overshadow marital relations. Cognitive methods, including cognitive-behavioral couple therapy, investigate and correct these beliefs. Correcting misconceptions and misconceptions leads to elimination of

misunderstandings, reduction of resentment and anger, attention to the positive aspects of each other's behavior, and finally, an increase in marital intimacy and satisfaction. Also, several researches have investigated the role of cognitive-behavioral approach in marital therapy. In a study titled the effectiveness of group training for women and correspondence training of their spouses in a cognitive-behavioral way on marital satisfaction, the results showed an increase in marital satisfaction in the experimental group. In another independent research, Ghorbani (2004) measured the effect of rational-emotional couple therapy, which is a cognitive method, on the conflicts and irrational thoughts of spouses and concluded that this method is effective in reducing conflicts and irrational thoughts of couples and, as a result, on their marital satisfaction. Is. In another study, Shah Moradi (2004) also showed that cognitive-behavioral therapy with a group method had an effective role on the level of incompatibility, expression of affection, agreement and marital satisfaction of married women. In addition to the aforementioned researches, researches have shown that factors are effective in maintaining the stable level of compatibility and satisfaction in marriage, such as avoidant attachment style, which directly and significantly has a negative effect on marital satisfaction. Also, processes such as sexual intimacy, conflict management and communication act as mediators of the relationship of attachment styles in marital satisfaction. These types of interventions can be targeted by family counselors (Mokhtar Arefi et al.,2018). In explaining and interpreting the results of the present research, it can be acknowledged that the cognitive-behavioral couple therapy approach is a combination of the cognitive approach and the behavioral-therapeutic approach and includes all the theoretical foundations of these two approaches. This approach considers marital problems, including intimacy, to be the result of spouses' inefficient communication skills and inability to effectively resolve problems and conflicts, irrational expectations and beliefs, and negative behavioral exchanges. In this approach, the therapist sets a special goal and evaluates current patterns and teaches new patterns such

as communication skills, problem solving, exchange of ideas, determining rules and roles, and how to deal with conflict. In this regard, the realization of these goals ultimately leads to an increase in intimacy between couples. The new civilization, which has been achieved in the light of all human efforts and the achievements of experimental sciences, has changed the face of human life and has resulted in many civil and industrial achievements, but this new civilization is not only necessary for the treatment of human spiritual pains and sufferings. did not show, but imposed new sufferings on people's previous pains, most of which originated from the impact of industrial life and modernism. Family is more than a collection of people who share a physical and psychological space together. Family is a unique communication system that is separate from friendship and work relationships. In different societies, marital relationships are highly valued, so that more than 80% of divorced people remarry (Goldenberg,2000). Some studies have shown that there are various conflicts in the lives of couples that affect their lives and spread to other aspects of life. From the perspective of cognitive-behavioral couple therapy, the causes of most behavioral problems and interpersonal conflicts, including marital conflict, it is due to the irrational beliefs of a person (Shafiabadi,2015; Flanagan and Flanagan,2004). Alice (2004) and Beck (1983) believe that cognitive distortions are among the factors that are most effective in receiving, understanding, and managing the external reality. These distortions have a lot to do with mood swings, negative emotions and interpersonal conflicts (Momini,2016). Considering the significant contribution of cognitive distortions in creating conflicts between spouses and marital satisfaction, and considering that one of the important differences between couples referring to the family court and couples with marital satisfaction is the presence of cognitive distortions, it is important and necessary to pay attention to this matter. It is based on it, it can lead to family consolidation, reduction of divorce rate and increase of mental health of spouses. One of the essentials of choosing the dependent variable of marital satisfaction, in



addition to being considered one of the most important variables in marital interactions according to the mentioned research, is the novelty of these fields and the lack of sufficient research in this field. To treat the problems caused by this component in marital relations, several intervention methods are used, from individual and group treatments to teaching different models. Cognitive-behavioral couple therapy is a way to empower couples to increase intimate interactions and reduce irrational thoughts in marital relationships, which has a positive view and aims to change faulty cognitions and old mental patterns and train communication and problem-solving skills that can be individually and be performed as a group. Researches that consider the effectiveness of this type of treatment can reduce treatment costs both for those seeking treatment and for the centers that provide these services. Also, the study of the effectiveness of this therapeutic method on the interactions of spouses can be a guide for counselors and couple's therapists who use various couples therapy methods, to compare their method with the CBCT approach if it is more qualitatively and quantitatively efficient than this method to help spouses and families to use. The results of this research draw the attention of family counselors to the importance of two important components of marital satisfaction and cognitive distortions, and provide the basis for examining them in relationships with spouses. The therapeutic model used in this research teaches counselors the principles and methods of intervening in the field of marital satisfaction and helps to improve spouses' relationships and enrich them. The message of this research can highlight the importance of examining the needs of spouses in order to create satisfaction from marital relations and the importance of their cognitive compatibility in premarital counseling.

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