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**INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MARRIAGE LIFE ENRICHMENT  
TRAINING ON INTIMACY AND RESILIENCY OF WOMEN WHO HAVE CONFLICT**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to explore effectiveness of instructing marital life enrichment on intimacy and tolerance in couples with conflict. The population of the study consists of all women having marital conflict in Lar. Learning process executed in Bandar Abbas. In a semi-experimental plan, 50 participants were selected from women in Lar and in random they were divided in two groups of evidence and experience. The psychic assessment was done through using questionnaires on intimacy (IS) and tolerance (CD-RIS) and indexes of intimacy and tolerance. Indexes of intimacy and tolerance collected in two sections that is before intervention meetings and after the last meeting (eight meetings in two months) and were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and multivariable variation analysis test. Findings: show that intervention of marital life enrichment on intimacy and tolerance have been effective and the difference between them was significant and meaningful ( $p < 0.01$ ). Conclusion: It can be concluded that based on the results, marital life enrichment would be a suitable intervention to improve couples' intimacy and tolerance.

**Key words: Instructing Marital Life Enrichment, Intimacy, Tolerance, Women With Conflict**

## INTRODUCTION

It is believed that all human beings have a basic need to establish cordial relations. Intimacy is considered a basic psychological need (Mann and Bader, 2008), in order to achieve this need and intimacy growth, marriage will provide a unique opportunity which is beyond intimate relationships with friends and relatives. The majority of people see the marriage as the most intimate relationship and the primary source of affection and support (Craig, 2000). Intimacy is an important and key feature of marriage relationships and it is one of the obvious features of successful marriage. This feature refers to the interaction between the partners. The absence or lack of it is an indicator of marital turmoil (Halford, 2005). Intimacy which is regarded as an important process in the development of friendly relations and nowadays is a major concern of family and counseling. Technology, cultural, economic, social and religious changes and changes in the primary functions of marriage, including love and intimacy between husband and wife have a major role (Berger and Hanna, 1999). Sternberg (1987), love is divided into three parts. Desire, intimacy and commitment, intimacy is the behavior that increases the emotional closeness. Emotional

closeness including mutual understanding and support, establishment of communication and sharing your work and assets to another person. The Eshleman and Clark (1987) stated that intimacy refers to any relationship or friendship that includes informal warmth, openness and sharing. Although the conclusions are subjective definitions, but they have a relative basis (Olia, Fatehizadeh and Bahrami, 2006). Adams and Cingras (1982), in this context, analyze the individuals' mental statements about the meaning of intimacy, and they gathered them as a scaling substance which is validated and in accordance with a multidimensional theory.

According to the literature related to the topics of marriage, intimacy in a long term romantic relationship is determined according to the level of commitment and emotional, cognitive, and physical closeness and interaction that a person is experienced with his partner. Kubrat and Harof in following terms specify the four components of intimacy that includes: emotional, cognitive, physical intimacy, and two themes that one is to in order have a close relationship and intercourse which is lied in the cognitive, emotional and physical potential intimacy and the other is concerned

with communication / self-disclosure (Berger and Hannah, 1999). According to the mentioned definitions components of intimacy can be divided into 9 areas (Bagarozzi, 2001), emotional intimacy, which requires the submission and sharing of all emotions, whether positive emotions (happiness, ecstasy and excitement) or negative emotions (sadness, frustration, fear, guilt, loneliness, boredom, fatigue and depression) are regarded with his wife, (Olia, Fatehizade, Bahrami, 2006).

Several factors can affect the formation of intimacy between couples, including these terms: love, care and sex. Research results showed that Farogina and Hokaas showed that the attachment, caring and sex have a unique affection on the intimacy of couples (Farogina, 1998). According to the Rovine and his coworkers' beliefs, intimacy gets clear when marriage have a good function and loss of intimacy stating this issue that marriage relation have a weak function (The Rovine, Laurenceau & Barrett, 2005). One way to enhance intimacy between couples is to educate them and marriage enrichment education plays an important role in this regard, marriage enrichment movement made great contributions to the growth and development of millions of married couples, in enriching the marriage

life, existing and available elements in a relationship upgraded and the change is made in it. The purpose of this change and improvements is to turn the lack of intimacy to intimacy (Olson, 1981).

Another issue that is crucial in a successful or unsuccessful marriage, is the spouse resiliency (Diener; Oishi; Luckas, 2003). Resiliency is a concept that is rooted in positive psychology-oriented, and research suggests that some abiding people, after encountering difficult situations in life, returning to the level of performance, while some others after dealing with failures, tragedies and difficulties improved toward their past, totally resiliency individuals easily accept the realities of life, have faith in a meaningful life and in facing the stressful changes they turn them into lucrative opportunities

(Khalatbary and Bahari, 2010). Kumpfer (1999) believes that the resiliency or return to basic balance or achieving equilibrium at a higher level (in threatening terms) and basically they would have to provide the successful consistency causes in life. The findings suggest that resiliency features have an important role in marital satisfaction, marital relationships, reduce stress and increase positive emotions in marital relationships. (Huber, et al., 2010; Neft and

Bradly, 2011; or Lataillade, 2006, Curtis and the Cicchetti, 2007). By improving the resiliency of individuals, can resist and overcome toward stress, anxiety and psychological factors that are responsible for creating many of the problems, (Connor, 2006; Wilson and et al., 2004).

The importance of these variables gets more in a situation where couples are living with conflict or dissatisfaction with life and the importance of interventions that can change the course of it is essential. One of these interventions is to enrich the relationships of couples who have conflict. In general, marriage enrichment program on marital relationships, and resolving conflicts between them, financial management, marital satisfaction, couples activities during leisure, religious beliefs of each party, the relationship between children and parents, family and friends, realistic expectations of each of the spouses of each other, sexual expectations, the role of the family in marriage, and the couple's activities are regarded and teach these terms to couple in this field (Khamse, 2003). These training mainly includes communication skills, creating satisfaction of communication, active listening, conflict management skills, problem-solving skills, assertive learning predatory behavior, emotions and excitement

controls, self-awareness and recognition of couples and the other and emotional partner life and strengthening relations and emotional relations between them (Olia, Fatehizadeh and Bahrami, 2007). Therefore, based on the mentioned terms, the main objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching the marriage life enrichment on marital intimacy and resiliency of couples who have conflicts.

**Investigating Methods:** This present study is in a quasi-experimental design in the term of pre-posttest with the control group. Independent variable of that enrichment intervention education is applied to marriage life which is only conducted in the intervention group and its effect on marital intimacy variables, and marriage life resiliency of mothers who are in the intervention or experimental group were evaluated and were compared with the control group.

The study sample includes of all women with marital conflict in Lar city, the final sample of participants based on inclusion criteria including (to be a resident of the city of Lar, having the ability to access the company's interest in the training program, informed consent to participate in research, having marital conflict on the basis of diagnosis of clinical psychologists of

counseling centers, lack of attending the educating classes and the same methods of intervention and also has the least education ability to read) Through convenient sampling method of 50 women who went to counseling centers of Lar city in the first half of 2014, for example, final selected sample randomly divided into two groups of 25. Before the start of intervention sessions a consultation session in order to (cooperation, getting familiar with the problems caused by the conflict in the lives of couples, concerns, expectations and therapeutic classes about privacy, confidentiality, etc.) were held, after performing the sampling and testing random assignment and control groups, marital intimacy tests and resiliency in the test run, then emotional enrichment program for six

90-minute sessions in a compact group at 6 weeks was applied on the experimental group. The test was performed on both groups.

#### **The Methods of How to Run Meetings:**

The independent variable in this study consisted of six sessions in accordance with the predetermined group, in a step to step method was conducted during 6 sessions of 90 minutes once a week, a summary of a group training program enrichment of marriage life are followed in this table (Olia, Fatehizade and Bahrami, 2007).

The main package of enrichment programs is came from the program of prepare / enrich the 2000 version and other techniques are reached from another enrichment programs.

Row	the session title	General purpose
1	Users getting familiar with each other, the introduction of group rules, couples communication evaluation and investigation	Introduction and members getting to know of the objectives and logic of the work
2	Training intimacy	Training techniques to enhance sexual, physical, emotional, intellectual and behavioral intimacy of couples
3	Cognitive restructuring	Reformulation of negative attributions to provide scientific justification for more optimistic justification, providing real content to facilitate irrational expectations and replacing papers insist on mutual causality
4	Improvement of sex education	Training techniques to raise sexual awareness of couples and eliminate negative beliefs in this regard
5	Home training management	Training techniques for dealing with the main family, children and sound financial management of home
6	Conflict resolution and problem solving	Understanding the process of conflict resolution in the (problem-solving) and inhibiting factors of conflict resolution

**Research tools contained two questionnaires:**

In this study, a questionnaire was used to measure the variables of interest:

**Resiliency Scale (CD-RIS):** This questionnaire was conducted by Connor and Davidson (2003), by a review of research sources (1979-1997), in resiliency area. It has 25 words, or statements that on a five-point

scale of Likert is scoring between zero (completely false) and four (always true). The maximum score in this item is 100 and the minimum score is zero on this scale and scores of each participants is equal to the total value of the sum of the scores obtained and the resiliency of each subjects is equal to the raw score obtained which is divided by 100 multiplied by 100. Mohammadi (2005), the reliability of this instrument has reported by using Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. Its validity has conducted by using factor analysis, calculation of each score is showed by the total score that beside the three questions, other questions' coefficients were between 0.14 and 0.64. In the research of Ebadat Poor, Navabnejad, Shafi Abadi and phalsaphinejad (2013), have been reported equal to 0.90.

**Couples Intimacy Inventory:** This questionnaire is conducted by Bagarozzi (2001), to assess needs in the intimacy of the emotional, psychological, intellectual, sexual, physical, spiritual, social, aesthetic and recreational dimensions. It includes of 41 questions that the respondents are ranked from 1 means (in no way there is no need) to 10 means (requires a lot), every question answered. Etemadi (2007), to determine the content validity, gave the questionnaire to 15 teachers and 15 couple and its content

validity was confirmed. Reliability coefficient of the questionnaire by using Cronbach's alpha was 0.94 (Khamse, 2009). Finally, to analyze the data obtained, in addition to using descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis of variance analysis (MANOVA) was used.

## **RESULTS**

Investigation of descriptive status of research variables in the two groups is in this way, such as age, in the test group, 12% (3) are under 20 years old, 56% (14) are in the age group of 21-30 years and 28% (7) are in the age group of 31-40 and 4% (1) are between 41-50 years old in the control group, also the number of participants in the age group under 20 years is (4%) (1), and in the age group of 21-30 years old is 24% (6), 60% (15) are in the age group of 31-40 years old and 12% (3) are in the age group of 41-50 years old. In terms of education level, 36% (9) are in the test group under diploma, 52% (13) of them have diplomas and Associate Degree and 12% (3) have license, and 32% or (8) individuals of the control group are educated in high school diploma, 48% (12) have diploma and associate degree and 20% (5) had a bachelor's degree.

Comparing the pre-test and post-test variables showed that the control group in pre-test, had the less marital intimacy

degree ( $M = 13.72$ ,  $SD = 3.12$ ) than the post-test ( $M = 19.36$ ,  $SD = 3.29$ ). But in the control group, in the pre-test ( $M = 15.80$ ,  $SD = 3.66$ ) showed no changes in the marital intimacy than the post-test ( $M = 15.60$ ,  $SD = 3.00$ ). About the resiliency like the test group ( $M = 15.64$ ,  $SD = 2.55$ ) is less than the posttest ( $M = 20.12$ ,  $SD = 2.95$ ), and the resiliency of the pre-test in the control group ( $M = 15.88$ ,  $SD = 2.30$ ) in comparing to pretest ( $M = 16.20$ ,  $SD = 2.96$ ), showed no differences (**Table 2**).

Data related to the effects of marriage enrichment intervention for each of the variables of marital intimacy and resiliency were analyzed by the help of the multivariate

variance analysis of two groups. Multivariate analysis showed that there is a significant multiplier multivariate variance effect,  $\eta^2_p = 0.96$ ,  $P = 0.0001$ ,  $F_{(2, 24)} = 1313.95$  (**Table 3**).

Investigating the effects within the group indicated that the group factor had a significant effect on marital intimacy based on the group (experimental and control) was significant ( $F = 79.9$ ,  $F(1,24)$ ) and for resiliency as well as the groups (test and control) the effect was significant ( $F = 69.8$ ,  $F(1,24)$ ) and in both variables there were significantly difference between the groups (**Table 4**).

Table 1) descriptive statistics indicators of the samples (n = 50)

	30-21		6 (24%)	14(56%)
	40-31		15 (0/60)	7 (28%)
	50-41		3 (12%)	1 (4%)
Education	The Diploma		8 (32%)	9 (36%)
	Diploma and Associate Degree		12 (48%)	13(52%)
	License		5 (20%)	3 (12%)

Table 2: Indices of Intimacy and Resiliency Statistics (n = 50)

Indicators	Group	Phase	Average	Standard deviation
Sexual intimacy	Trial	Pretest	13.72	3.12
		Posttest	19.36	3.29
	Witness	Pretest	15.80	3.66
		Posttest	15.60	00/3
Resiliency	Trial	Pretest	15.64	2.55
		Posttest	20.12	2.95
	Witness	Pretest	15.88	2.30
		Posttest	16.20	2.96

Table 3: Significant Analysis of Multivariate Variance

	Effects	Amounts	F	dF 1	dF 2	Confidence level.	$\eta^2_p$	Power
Fixed	Pillay rejection	0.99	1313.95	2	23	0.0001	0.96	1
	Wilkes Landa	0.09	1313.95	2	23	0.0001	0.96	1
	Hotelling rulerejection	114.25	1313.95	2	23	0.0001	0.96	1
	The biggest surface root	114.25	1313.95	2	23	0.0001	0.96	1
Group	Pillay rejection	0.06	2.69	2	23	0.01	0.96	0.73
	Wilkes Landa	0.93	2.69	2	23	0.01	0.96	0.73
	Hotelling rule rejection	0.07	2.69	2	23	0.01	0.96	0.73
	The biggest surface root	0.07	2.69	2	23	0.01	0.96	0.73

Table 4: The Effect of the Test Subjects

The source changes	The dependent variable	Total squares	df	Mean square	F	Confidence level.	$\eta^2_p$	Power
Fixed	Sexual intimacy	4705.96	1	4705.96	480.52	0.0001	0.952	1
	Resiliency	10120.36	1	10120.36	1164.15	0.0001	0.950	1
Group	Sexual intimacy	235.040	1	235.040	9.79	0.01	0.021	0.432
	Resiliency	208.640	1	208.640	8.69	0.001	0.050	0.804
Error	Sexual intimacy	00/4941	24	00/4941				
	Resiliency	00/10329	24	00/10329				
Total	Sexual intimacy	235.04	25	235.04				
	Resiliency	208.64	25	208.64				

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of training of marriage life enrichment of intimacy and resiliency of women with marital conflict. Due to this goal, the two groups were studied. By using a questionnaire of marital intimacy and resiliency in both groups between pre-test and post-test (after six sessions of intervention) were evaluated. Our findings showed that education, training marital intimacy enrichment had a significant impact on women with marital conflict and the difference between the two groups was statistically significant, the results of this research are in order to confirm the findings of Etemadi (2006), based on the application

of cognitive - behavioral techniques and emotional intimacy increase, as well as Ollia and colleagues (2006) reported marriage enrichment are in a harmony and order with the couple's intimacy. Berat in investigating the relationship between religion intimacy and marital satisfaction in the field of educating marriage enrichment found that there is an indirect relationship between marriage by religious devotion and marital satisfaction increase. Kalkan & Ersanli (2008), and Guerny (2005), in examining the relationship between religious devotion and sexual satisfaction reported a significant and positive marriage fertilizing. Also the results of this research is coordinated with the related practical application of intimate

relationship skills of Buttler & Wampler (1999). The other study findings showed that marriage life enrichment education on women resiliency with marital conflict, was conducted in the test group during the significant increase in the test scores of resiliency. However, there was no difference between pre-test and post-test in the control group. One of the issues addressed in the marriage life enrichment is educating proper communication between the couples, the results of this research is in order to confirm the findings of Hickmon, Protinsky & Singh(1997); reported the effectiveness of marriage enrichment program on marital intimacy, Orki and colleagues (2013), that reported the effectiveness of the training enrichment program of relationship between spouses on adaptation and reduce marital conflict and also Najarpouryan, Fatehizadeh and Abedi (2012), and Zaharakar and Lavvaf Poor noori (2014), reported the effectiveness of marital cognitive therapy on coping and marital satisfaction increases, Nazari, Mohammadkhani and Dola tshahi (2012), that reported the effectiveness of marital therapy treatment on marital satisfaction, which are in consistent with each other. Overall, the findings suggest that individual resiliency, spiritual beliefs and family functioning are effective directly or

indirectly in reducing marital disenchantment, marital conflict and marital satisfaction but the impact of resiliency is more on family functioning and marital disenchantment reduction

(Ebadat Pour And Et al., 2013). It can be said that people who have the resiliency, are remedial and flexible, adapted according to changes in the environment and after solving stressors quickly improve to its normal mode. People who are at the end of the low level of resiliency, slightly adapt themselves to the new situation, these are improving slowly from stressful situation to normal and natural situation (Oraki et al., 2013). In the education of marital therapy is believed that problems and differences between spouses is considered as a normal part of marriage, but the way to accept and deal with these issues increase through a number of factors including intimacy between couples, intimacy is important due to this reason that causes marriage to have a good function, and the lack of use of destructive methods such as problem solving through conflicting and avoiding and more distances between spouses, divorce and separation. Women's mental health is not useful only for women but also the community will benefit from it. It raises women's empowerment, intellectual and cultural level of society increasingly and

women as nurturers of future generations, the more empowerment and more aware as they get in the field of science and technology, and according to the crucial role of women in family women resiliency plays an important role in the face of problems that lead to conflict and pointlessness and dissatisfaction of married life.

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