

## Effectiveness of Stress Management Skills training on the Mental Health of Adolescents in the High Schools

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### ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of stress management training on mental health of adolescents in the high school adolescents. This experimental study examined the pre-test and post-test. For this purpose, 38 students were selected by multistage random sampling from Zone 8 and high school students were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Over the course of experimental group participated in 10 sessions of 60-minute sessions of stress management skills (experimental intervention), while the control group received no specific variable. This questionnaire had 28 questions of public health. The results of the analysis showed that stress management training to gain the mental health of adolescents. The results showed that stress management skills training is effective in reducing physical symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunction and depression.

**KEYWORDS:** Stress Management Skills, Mental Health, Training, Adolescents.

### INTRODUCTION

There are two considerable definitions about mental health. In the first definition, mental health is expertise field of general health to reduce mental disease in the society and survey different kind of mental disorders and factors influencing them. After recognizing causes of mental disorders, experts are responsible to solve causes and overcome them. Since, social and mental factors cause to mental disorders, but preventive ways is multidimensional and should be surveyed in different aspects. In the second definition, mental health is defined as mind health and shows positive situation and mental health and assist individuals to value themselves in individual, national and international level. When mental health was known, it should be accessed to smooth individual and social evolution (1). Based on whit (2001), individual with mental health have several features including.

1- Self-concept and self-love: this feature includes self-supposed (supposition about self) and self respect (accepting self). If these two concepts are together, part of mental health is complemented. 2- Relationships with others: When you have a positive self-concept and self-esteem and self-acceptance and love, then well be able to establish a good relationship with others. 3. Cope with the needs of life, coping with the needs and requirements of life and mental health is part of the control requirements and challenges of life. The requirements are behalf parents, family, friends, school, actions, occupations, etc. stress management is so important in this field. When people are under stress, coping skills should be required to thereby able to reduce the effects of stress on physical and mental stress. if stress is managed (reduce, or control) and Coping skills are available, person will be able to meet the needs and challenges in the life. 4- appropriate expression of emotions: people should be able to identify their own emotions and express them appropriately. Otherwise, their mental health and others will be injured.

Stress is one of main causes of diseases and there is significant correlation between stress and mental disorders, heart disease, cancer, digestive discomfort, skin. Brmmener (2002) explained stress as uncertain body's response to any request, so the general compatibility is known as spontaneous response to any physical or emotional threat or organ health. Psychologists define stress as expected conformity, coping and adaptatin of organism (Ratous, 2007) to adapt to stress, coping and adaptation of organisms to define a place (Rattus, 2007). Extreme and long stress of life changes (Harkness, K, L., & Luther, 2001) can affect a person's adaptation ability and leading to depression and the damage to the body and finally destroy the joy of life (Kiecolt- Glaser, 2002 ).

the statistic of mental disorder prevalence in different countries and Iran shows importance of mental health better. The World Health Organization in 2000 announced that about 500 millions people in the world affected one of mental disorders and half of them affected light mental disorders like depression and stress.

Adolescence is one of vulnerable period of life, especially when the period is associated to depression from childhood to adulthood. Adolescence is called time of chaos, because the person has to tolerate the physical, emotional and social change that can cause anxiety and concern. youth don't have enough skill to manage stress and is vulnerable

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compared to adults. The studies show that youth encounters factors influencing stress such as fear, worry, shame, anger, jealousy, depression, choosing education, anxiety, loss of confidence, conflicts of adolescence period etc., if initial mental healthy methods are not provided, physical and mental disorders are raised. In order to increase mental health in the youth, they should know routine stress and worry to tolerate. Stress management training plays an important role in mental health in adolescents and is also effective in improving academic achievement.

Lazarus, R. & Folkman (1984) believes, individuals who have auxiliary resources to encounter stress show lower vulnerability. Therefore, individual vulnerability is associated to stress and each of these resources could reduce factors influencing stress. When individuals are under stress should have skills to encounter it and reduce effects of the stress (Whit et al, 2000).

Most of psychological health studies explain methods to assist individuals to encounter stress (Ratous, 2007). Kiecolt et al showed that comfort during exam increases body safety system performance. Owrngar et al, 1998 believed problem solving training is important to control stress, physical and mental health. Halamandaris, K. F. & Power (1999) showed that remarks of students which were calm during exam are lower compared to control group. Keogh, E. & Bond, F. W. & Flaxman (2006) studied effectiveness of stress management training on educational achievement and mental health of students and results showed that both educational performance and mental health of students in the examination group have been increased compared to control group. Zahrakar, Shafiabadai and Delavar (2006) studied effectiveness of safety training against stress to reduce mental health (depression and stress) and concluded this training was effective to reduce stress and these disorders. Results of Kavian et al (2007) studies showed stress control training can decrease stress and worry of university exam participants. Pourkazem et al (2007) studies effectiveness of stress control training on stress and Non-ulcer dyspepsia improvement and founded safety training is effective to decrease stress symptom and dyspepsia.

Based on the above notes, this study aims to investigate effectiveness of stress management to increase mental health in the youth.

## METHODOLOGY

### Society and statistical sample

Statistical society of this study includes all female students in the high school (second and third grade) in region 8 of Tehran in 2012-2013. 38 students were selected through multistage random sampling method and were placed in two control and experiment groups.

### Instruments

General health questionnaire and Goldberg form with 28 questions were used to measure the study variables. General health questionnaire is a valid psychological questionnaire which is used to identify individuals who suffer mental health and is sensitive to the transient diseases, which may be healed without treatment. High rank in this test shows disease existence and low rank shows lack of disease or having general health (Kavian, Mosavi and Mohit, 2001). General health questionnaire is known as screening tool in the psychology and is in 60, 30, 28 and 12 questions (Handerson, 1990). The used version in this study is 28 form.

This questionnaire includes four sub-scale and seven questions in physical symptom, stress, social performance and depression. Cheung & Spears (1994) estimated reliability of the general health questionnaire as 47% which is significant in level 0.05. Alpha coefficient for all scale was 0.8. Also, Alpha coefficient for sub-scales like physical symptom, stress, social ineffectiveness and depression were respectively 0.66, 0.72, 0.79 and 0.85 and showed significant difference. Molavi (2002) estimated validity and reliability of the questionnaire as 86%. Goldberg reported 89% for validity.

Alpha Cronbach coefficient in this study for all scale was 89% which was accepted in statistical.

### Design

This experimental study has been done in pre-test and post-test plans with control group. Each group replied to general health questionnaire (post-test and pre-test) twice. Experiment group has participated in stress management training meeting for 10 sessions and each session took 60 minutes. There was no variable for control group.

### Intervention method

The content of the meeting was done based on Mcnamara training method (2001)

**First session:** talk about the importance and necessity stress management skills, defining stress management, individual differences in the face of stress.

**Second session:** discuss and talk about the overall effect of stress on the body machines and effects of stress on physical, psychological and behavior

**third session:** identifying factors influencing stress in the lives of young people and the consequences of improper deal with stress in their lives.

**Fourth session:** intellectual solutions to cope with stress, learn to control thoughts, introduced coping methods, (avoidance-focused and emotion-focused)

**Fifth session:** discuss the central-oriented methods to fight against stress and reviews people behavior against stress.

**sixth session:** introduced stress coping skills and practice the first step in coping skills, including knowledge of their emotions, study skills, exam preparation and time management

**seventh session** - confidence and self-esteem, coping with stress, depression and anxiety on the full extent of irrational thinking.

**Eighth session:** coping skills to deal with stress as the second step, the long-term and short-term method to removes stress, introducing calming methods.

**nineth session:** physical methods of coping with stress (healthy food, sleep and enough exercise).

**tenth session** - work on progressive relaxation techniques, exercise and repeat, to ensure that adolescents learn and apply skills.

**Findings**

**Table 1- Average And Standard Deviance Of physical symptom In Control And Experiment Group In Pre-Test And Post- Test**

Standard deviance	Average	Group	Stage
4.12	10.25	Experiment	Pre-test
3.99	10.31	Control	
2.86	6.37	Experiment	Post-test
3.79	11.01	Control	

**Table 2- Average And Standard Deviance Of stress In Control And Experiment Group In Pre-Test And Post- Test**

Standard deviance	Average	Group	Stage
4.31	12.25	Experiment	Pre-test
3.95	12.11	Control	
2.86	6.29	Experiment	Post-test
4.56	13.23	Control	

**Table 3- Average And Standard Deviance Of social performance In Control And Experiment Group In Pre-Test And Post- Test**

Standard deviance	Average	Group	Stage
4.25	12.05	Experiment	Pre-test
4.33	13	Control	
2.90	6.09	Experiment	Post-test
4.12	13.11	Control	

**Table 4- Average And Standard Deviance Of Depression In Control And Experiment Group In Pre-Test And Post- Test**

Standard deviance	Average	Group	Stage
4.09	10.27	Experiment	Pre-test
4.10	10.08	Control	
2.42	6.21	Experiment	Post-test
4.51	11.21	Control	

**Table 5- The Results of the Post Test and Pre-Test Marks in the General Health Components of Control and Experiment Group**

	Significance level	F	Average of square	Degree of freedom	Total of square	Variables
	0.0001	20.25	235.25	1	235.25	Physical symptom
	0.0001	24.56	329.68	1	329.68	Strees
	0.0001	35.56	196.95	1	196.95	Social performance disorder
	0.0001	17.23	207.54	1	207.54	depression

As shown in the table 5, adolescents in experiment and control group showed significant difference in term of general health components (physical symptoms, stress, disorder in social performance and depression). in other word, management stress skill training leads to decreasing each of disorder components in the general health.

**Conclusion**

Mental health as a general overview of health concept is defined as any thoughts to prevent mental disorders (Milanifar, 2003). Human societies can not survive with out health and observing hygiene, because illness and disability impairs human relationships and the sense of security and solidarity (Shamloo, 2003).

Walter Canon, the American pysilogist expressed equilibrium in the stress and believed human should have internal equilibrium and physiological interaction to survive. This equilibrium or stability is maintained in collaboration with various internal organs and fluids, chemical and electrophysiological interactions. If the balance disturbs due to external stimuli, the body tries to restore the balance immediately. Canon defined stress as any internal or external mental pressure which disturb homeostasis of the organism. role of stress in the disease shows bilateral effects. As the disease influence

on stress, stress increases on disease progression. Since can affect a wide range of behaviors, we can learn the skills necessary to control the disease progression (Anderson et al., 1995) and the level of perceived stress changes the evaluation system (Holmes, 1976).

The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of stress management training skills in general health in adolescents. findings showed significant difference between the scores pre-test and post-test of the experimental group. also, there was significant difference between the scores of pre-test in the experimental and control groups. So concluded, adolscents who are understnading and pplying stress management skills, enoy mentalh health more.

The result of the findings is consistent to Timmerman et al (1998) F Halamandaryz and Power (1999), Kug (2005), Lou (1994), Hardin et al (2002), Kavian et al (2006) and Pourkazemi et al (2007). The findings of this research have shown that stress management skills can be improved most of stress, worries and social inneffectivenesses.

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