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The effectiveness of social skills training on students' levels of happiness

Nasram Shayan^{a*}, Teymor Ahmadi Gatab^b^a *Alzahra University, Tehran, Tehran, Iran*^b *Young Researchers Club, Qhaemshahr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qhaemshahr, Iran*

Abstract

Introduction: Improving the individuals' health is one of the most important factors in communities. Nowadays, the health is considered as a complete physical and mental welfare. Not just the absence of disease or disability, the concepts such as self-satisfaction, life expectancy and social welfare in mental health description are the factors considered by World Health Organization, which are along with positive emotions like joy, peace, and happiness. Happiness, in the field of psychology, is a positive emotion and deeper than a temporary good condition. Happiness is a stable feeling in positive emotions, understanding the reality of life and is meaningful. Happiness and mental health include positive emotions such as joy, peace, the sense of flowing and the fascination in life. General satisfaction, in various aspects of life, is called happiness. **Purpose:** To create happiness in people, motivational and cognitive processes can be taught to people that cause or increase the happiness. The aim of this study is to determine the effectiveness of social skills training on students' levels of happiness. **Materials and methods:** This study is experimentally conducted by pre-test, post-test and proceeding in control group. The subjects of the study are selected from four groups of male and female students, two experimental groups and two control groups. The method of social skills training was as an independent variable and the level of happiness was as a dependent variable. They conducted the pre-test before training and post-test after four weeks of training, and proceeding six weeks after training. The statistical universe of this study includes all third year students in Babol University of Medical Sciences in academic year of 88. The sample group consisted of 100 students (males / females) who were selected by multistage random cluster sampling. To measure the levels of students' happiness, the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was used which has 29 questions with four options. The intervention method- Levinson and Goth Lyb's social skills training program: the social skills training program is a great series of cognitive and behavioral techniques to increase the individuals' happiness developed by Levinson and Goth Lyb (1995). To data analysis, the method of descriptive and inferential statistics indexes and SPSS software were used. **Results:** The statistical analysis indicated a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of students' levels of happiness. So, it can be said that the social skills training programs lead to increase the levels of happiness. According to the results, there is no significant difference between male and female students' levels of happiness. And also, regarding to the effectiveness of social skills training program, there is no significant difference between males and females. **Conclusion:** The findings indicated that Levinson and Goth Lyb's social skills training method is effective to increase the students' levels of happiness. Regarding the continuation of happiness during the time, the studies indicated that the subjects even at the time of proceeding and after a long time were happy. In general, the researches indicated that happy and unhappy people are different in terms of intellectual structure, judgments and motivation. Happy people have more individual, familial, job, educational and social efficiency. Because the feeling of welfare and happiness has a significant role in students' mental health, and all people aware of its positive effects on personal, familial, social, educational and job aspects, it is recommended that special attention should be paid to mental health. These findings indicate the importance of social skills training workshops in the first year of university. Due to its cost-effectiveness, in terms of both space and time, this program can be used well in university.

Keywords: education / social skills / fun / students (girls / boys)

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* Corresponding Author name.

E-mail address: t_ahmadi2008@yahoo.com

Introduction

Improving the individuals' health is one of the most important factors in communities. Nowadays, the health is considered as a complete physical and mental welfare. Not just the absence of disease or disability, the concepts such as self-satisfaction, life expectancy and social welfare in mental health description are the factors considered by World Health Organization, which are along with positive emotions like joy, peace, and happiness. Happiness, in the field of psychology, is a positive emotion and deeper than a temporary good condition. Happiness is a stable feeling in positive emotions, understanding the reality of life and is meaningful. Happiness and mental health include positive emotions such as joy, peace, the sense of flowing and the fascination in life. General satisfaction, in various aspects of life, is called happiness.

Students involve a significant number of the society. Occasionally, the universities' problems become dire and affect the various aspects of students' life including their happiness. Happiness is one of the basic concepts and components of individuals' life, especially students. And different branches of learning, including psychology, attempt to understand and facilitate it in individuals' life. Happiness has three main components: positive emotions, life satisfaction, absence of negative emotions such as anxiety, depression. Positive relations, having a definite goal in life, personal development, care for others and environment also as the components of happiness. This psychological considered component affects will be affected by frequency factors such as comparison strategies. Amenability or positive affection is along with regular physical activity, adequate sleep, regular social relation with friends and families and efforts to achieve invaluable personal goals.

The results of Mayyearz's (2000) and Peterson's study indicate that happiness can improve physical and mental health Lu Bomsky, Sheldon, Shyd (2005) believe that every person has a model for happiness and unhappiness that causes him/her to interpret the events such a way that keep her happy. In general, they believed that happy people in comparison to unhappy respond to conditions and events in a more positive and compatible way and have lower stress levels and stronger immune system and are more creative. Given the abovementioned, the necessity to deal with the happiness subject is also important in many aspects: first is that happiness is a contagious matter, it means that the individual's happiness can also lead to people's happiness. Secondly, it makes life more pleasant (Abedi, 2005). Regarding to the advantages of having a happy life in society, especially for students as young and promising community, some of the psychologists and researchers of happiness attempt to provide some methods to increase the happiness level. Among these methods are Levisohn's and Goth Lyb's social skills training program (1995). Beck's Cognitive Therapy (1991), Bus's interpersonal communications training (200) and the people's instillation method (Argyle,2004). Given that happiness is an internal matter and interpretation of events lead to happiness. To create happiness in people, motivational and cognitive processes can be taught to people that cause or increase

the happiness. The aim of this study is to determine the effectiveness of social skills training on students' levels of happiness.

Materials and methods:

This study is experimentally conducted by pre-test, post- test and proceeding in control group. The subjects of the study are selected from four groups of male and female students, two experimental groups and two control groups. The method of social skills training was as an independent variable and the level of happiness was as a dependent variable. They conducted the pre-test before training and post-test after four weeks of training, and proceeding six weeks after training. The statistical universe of this study includes all third year students in Babol University of Medical Sciences in academic year of 88. The sample group consisted of 100 students (males / females) who were selected by multistage random cluster sampling. To measure the levels of students' happiness, the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was used which has 29 questions with four options. The intervention method- Levinson and Goth Lyb's«social skills training program: the social skills training program is a great series of cognitive and behavioral techniques to increase the individuals' happiness developed by Levinson and Goth Lyb (1995). To data analysis, the method of descriptive and inferential statistics indexes and SPSS software were used.

Results:

Table (1) shows mean and standard deviation of happiness test scores in sample and control group.

Groups	Subjects	pre-test		post- test		proceeding	
		Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Sample	Girl	49/54	11/01	79/98	10/11	88/98	10/01
	Boy	50/16	9/93	78/42	8/99	87/32	8/87
	Total	49/85	10/47	79/20	9/95	88/15	9/44
Control	Girl	50/25	10/32	42/49	10/02	51/21	9/63
	Boy	49/65	9/98	48/93	9/36	49/10	9/63
	Total	49/95	10/15	9/17	9/69	50/15	9/53

The statistical analysis indicated a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of students' levels of happiness. So, it can be said that the social skills training programs lead to increase the levels of happiness. According to the results, there is no significant difference between male and female students' levels of happiness. And also, regarding to the effectiveness of social skills training program, there is no significant difference between males and females.

Conclusion

The findings indicated that Levinson and Goth Lyb's social skills training method is effective to increase the students' levels of happiness. These findings are similar to the results of the other studies on the effectiveness of this method on happiness (Abedi 2003, Abedi 2005, Levisohn and Goth Lyb's 1995). In Levisohn's and Goth Lyb's (1995) and Levisohn's and Haps's studies, the effectiveness of this method on increasing the levels of happiness in depressed people and families has also been approved. In addition, Argyle showed that a part of the explanation of objectivism (extroverted people's) happiness is due to their better social skills especially خودابرازی and the ability to cooperate. Lu and Argyle's (1991) study about the depressed people showed that these individuals are alone, seeking isolation, ostracized and often lacking of social skills. He believes that a good relationship during a period of time increases the levels of extroversion. In addition, extroverted people are happy due to more social skills and permanent social activities (Abedi, 2008). Moreover, the result of this study aligns with other researches done throughout the world. While studies show that women suffer from anxiety and depression twice as much than men or men suffer five times than women from alcoholism and antisocial personality disorders. In Robbins's and Rigger's studies (1991), there is no difference between the levels of happiness or social welfare feeling in men and women. In general, the researches indicated that happy and unhappy people are different in terms of intellectual structure, judgments and motivation. Happy people have more individual, familial, job, educational and social efficiency. Because the feeling of welfare and happiness has a significant role in students' mental health, and all people are aware of its positive effects on personal, familial, social, educational and job aspects, it is recommended that special attention should be paid to mental health. These findings indicate the importance of social skills training workshops in the first year of university. Due to its cost-effectiveness, in terms of both space and time, this program can be used well in university.

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