

The effectiveness of familiarity with existential concerns on the meaning of life and emotional self-regulation of women on the verge of divorce.

Sanaz Toghraei¹, Nareges Razeghi², Ali Nejati³

1. Master of Science in General Psychology, Department of Psychology, Tafresh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tafresh, Iran.
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Tafresh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tafresh, Iran (Corresponding Author)
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Tafresh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tafresh, Iran.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: *Emotional self-regulation, existential concerns, women, divorce, meaning of life*

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of familiarization with existential concerns on anxiety, meaning of life, and emotional self-regulation of women on the verge of divorce. The present study design was a semi-experimental pre-test-post-test with a control group. A total of 30 people from the above population were selected as samples using the convenience sampling method and were randomly assigned to the intervention group (including 15 people) and the control group (including 15 people). The Meaning of Life Scale (Steiger et al., 2006) and the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Garnofsky et al., 2001) were used to collect data. After the intervention group pre-tested for 10 90-minute sessions, the familiarization with existential concerns intervention was conducted in a group setting. After collecting the questionnaires for the post-test, the obtained data were analysed using the statistical method of multivariate analysis of covariance and univariate analysis of covariance. The study's findings showed a significant difference between the two intervention and control groups after the implementation of existential group therapy in terms of the meaning of life and emotional self-regulation. Therefore, it can be concluded that familiarity with existential concerns significantly positively affected the meaning of life and emotional self-regulation of women on the verge of divorce.

Introduction

Divorce has always been described as one of the most distressing life events and is associated with increased vulnerability to disease and other causes of mortality, as well as an increased risk of premature death (Sabarra & Cowan, 2017). Several theories have been proposed to explain the causes of divorce. One theory posits that the marital bond weakens when one partner's external criteria change and chooses a better option. A second theory suggests that the purpose of marriage is to maximize security and certainty, and when this is not achieved, divorce occurs. A third theory deals with learning. When couples get married, they are not very aware of their compatibility with each other. They learn over time, and divorce occurs when couples realize that they are not compatible with each other (Marinescu, 2017).

The meaning of a couple's individual life affects the meaning of their marriage and their shared life, and the reason for discouragement from marital relations is the adverse effects of the meaning of their individual life and the meaning of their marriage on each couple, as well as their inability to achieve a satisfactory common meaning, and thus couples seeking divorce do not have a close horizon and meaning of life (Giti Pasand et al., 2015). The definition of meaning in life has been presented in various forms, from coherence and integrity in life to purposefulness and having a direction or meaningfulness and ontological importance from the perspective of the experiencing individual. From Frankl's perspective (1984), the meaning of life refers to a kind of feeling of connection with the creator of existence, having a purpose in life, pursuing and achieving valuable goals, and achieving perfection. The meaning of life is essentially cognitive in nature because it includes individuals' beliefs about the existence of an ultimate goal in life, belief in spirituality, and the afterlife (Amiri Seif al-Dini Kohbanani and Saber, 2018). Strengthening the meaning of life, which is considered an indicator of behavioral adaptation to cope with psychological problems and deficiencies (Masrabadi et al., 2013). Another variable that seems to be related to the phenomenon of divorce is emotion regulation (Maheini et al., 2013). Emotions not only lead to quick and coordinated responses and attitudes to environmental stimuli, but also, due to their motivational importance, emotions are able to adapt behavior by changing the subjective value of the stimulus and developing frameworks for relationships (Malj-Bartek et al., 2015). Emotion regulation is the process by which individuals consciously or unconsciously adjust their emotions to respond appropriately to diverse environmental demands. In everyday life, individuals always employ systematic strategies to adjust the intensity or type of their emotional experiences or the event that evokes emotion. If individuals are unable to effectively manage emotional responses to everyday events or experience intense and prolonged periods of distress, they may develop emotional disorders (Hassani and Mir-Aghaei, 2012).

One of the methods of changing the meaning of life and regulating emotions in divorced women is the use of existential (philosophical) therapy. Philosophical psychotherapy is essentially a type of cognitive psychotherapy that affects behavior change and emotional control through thoughts, philosophical views, or personal attitudes (Heidenreich et al., 2021). Existential psychotherapy is a philosophical approach that deals with humans and their world. Existential psychotherapy focuses on choices and existing paths towards personal growth, which is very suitable for those who are facing important decisions in life, especially those who are dealing with failures in their married life (Lantz, 1996). In existential therapy, four main assumptions are considered that can be faced by the individual in a therapeutic situation. These assumptions are: life and death, freedom and responsibility, the choice between isolation and love, and finally, the search for meaning and meaninglessness (Heidenreich et al., 2021). Existential therapy helps individuals to understand the meaning of their lives, to be responsible, and to make the most of opportunities. The main goal of the described therapy is to help people be truly present in existence, that is, to help members establish a real and authentic connection with life and its phenomena. This is done by increasing the level of awareness of the members (Bovins, 2021). This approach encourages couples and married people to deal with the meaning of their daily married life (Lantz, 1996). In this regard, Yilmaz et al. (2019) have pointed out the effectiveness of existential therapy on the emotion regulation of depressed patients, especially in comparison with cognitive-behavioral therapy. Liebert et al. (2019) have pointed out the effectiveness of existential therapy on psychological disturbances in adolescents. Jacob et al. (2013) have stated that existential intervention is effective in couples counseling. Studies have also pointed to the effectiveness of this

method on marital satisfaction and interactions, including Kalantar (2011; 2012); Kalantar et al. (2012) and Nazari et al. (2014). On the other hand, Lorenz et al. (2006) studied the short-term and long-term effects of divorce on women and concluded that divorced women showed significantly higher levels of psychological stress and distress in the first years after divorce and higher levels of illness in the following decade, compared to married women. These women also experience higher levels of stressful life events that ultimately lead to depression. Considering the role of authentic response to the impact of existential concerns (freedom, responsibility, loneliness, meaning-seeking, and death) in enriching the quality of life in physical and psychological dimensions, and due to its importance after divorce, which plays a decisive role in the formation of a healthy society, conducting this research is of particular importance. In addition, there is a research gap regarding the effectiveness of familiarity with existential concerns on the meaning of life and emotional self-regulation of couples on the verge of divorce, especially women. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of familiarity with existential concerns on the meaning of life and emotional self-regulation of women on the verge of divorce, and the researcher seeks to answer the question: does familiarity with existential concerns have an effect on the meaning of life and emotional self-regulation of women on the verge of divorce?

Research Method

The statistical population of this study consisted of women referring to the Tehran Family Court (Vank) in the first 6 months of 2019, from which 30 people were selected as a sample based on inclusion and exclusion criteria and were randomly assigned to the intervention group (including 15 people) and the control group (including 15 people). The inclusion criteria included being between the ages of 25 and 40; having a minimum education level of a high school diploma; the reason for referring to the family court and filing for divorce, infidelity, or sexual problems; not taking psychiatric medications, and not participating in another treatment plan. The exclusion criteria were having severe psychiatric disorders; not wanting to continue cooperation; returning to married life; receiving psychological treatments, and taking psychiatric medications.

Research Instruments

Meaning in Life Questionnaire. The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MILQ) developed by Steiger et al. (2006) consists of 10 items that assess two factors: the existence of meaning in life and the search for meaning on a Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Steiger et al. (2006) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the existence of meaning in life subscale as 0.86 and the search for meaning as 0.87. This questionnaire was standardized in Iran by Mesrabadi et al. (2013), and the results showed that this instrument has an acceptable factor structure. In the study by Mesrabadi et al. (2013), the 2-factor structure of this instrument was confirmed by considering two interdependent factors and also considering five items.

Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. This questionnaire, developed by Garnevsy et al. (2001), consists of 36 items, which are divided into 9 subscales: positive refocusing, questions 4, 13, 22, 31; refocusing on planning, questions 5, 14, 23, 32; positive reappraisal, questions 6, 15, 24, 33; perspective-taking, questions 7, 16, 25, 34; and acceptance, questions 2, 11, 20, 29; and maladaptive strategies such as self-blame, questions 1, 10, 19, 28; blaming others, questions 9, 18, 27, 36; Rumination is assessed by questions 3, 12, 21, and 30, and catastrophizing is assessed by questions 8, 17, 26, and 35 on a Likert scale from never=1 to always=5. Hassani (2011) reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.76 to 0.92. In Hassani's (2011) study, the results of principal component analysis supported the original 9-factor model of the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire and explained 74% of the variation.

Session Guidelines and Content

The training program is designed on the basis that each session consists of four parts. In the first part,

the activities and assignments of the session are discussed for about 20 minutes. In the second part, they learn skills related to techniques for familiarizing themselves with existential concerns for at least 30 minutes, and in the third part, which lasts about 30 minutes, methods for using it in communication are discussed, and participants are encouraged to raise issues objectively and clearly, and in the final 10 minutes of the session, assignments for the next session are presented. For members of the intervention group (the existential approach was presented in groups for 90 minutes in each session, the content of the sessions is as follows:

Table 1. Brief description of sessions to familiarize yourself with existential concerns

Session Content	General Title	Session
Getting to know each other between the leader and members; expressing the goals, rules, and norms of the group; asking members to provide mutual feedback with the aim of forming a connection, facilitating self-expression and self-disclosure; defining and expressing an existential approach for members and the need for meaning in life.	Introduction	First
Discussing the members' feelings (here and now); discussing (who am I?) and its various aspects in different people; examining the members' feelings when thinking and discussing (who am I?); <u>believing and accepting themselves and their characteristics.</u>	Self-Awareness	Second
Reviewing the previous session's assignment; Addressing the concept of freedom, the right to choose, and limited existence; Paying attention to spiritual freedom as one of the dimensions of human existence and stating that man is not completely dominated by circumstances and that it is he who has the right to choose to confront circumstances or to surrender to them; Examining challenging situations of freedom in choice; Facing one's own responsibilities; Explaining the relationship between freedom and existential responsibility by the group leader.	Freedom and Responsibility	Third
Addressing the members' experiences and feelings towards loneliness; Familiarizing members with the concept of fundamental loneliness anxiety; Helping to understand themes such as loneliness, rejection, and isolation.	Loneliness	Fourth
Implementing the (lifeline) technique and discussing it freely; discussing death and expressing members' views and fears; sharing members' experiences and feelings about death; giving members an assignment to imagine that they will die in a week and what they will do from now until the week after their death.	Death	Fifth
Reviewing the assignment from the previous meeting and expressing members' feelings; examining members' experiences of death and the loss of loved ones; implementing the obituary technique; discussing the role of death in giving meaning to life; helping members accept death and the unpredictability of things as an inevitable reality; evoking members' feelings of freedom and responsibility as a result of death.	Death Anxiety	Sixth
Examining members' answers to the questions ((Does life have a specific meaning and significance?)) and ((What am I living for?)) Discussing members' experiences of times when they have experienced emptiness and meaninglessness; giving members feedback on their experiences; <u>challenging the concept of ((losing the meaning of life)).</u>	The Meaning of Life	Seventh
Exploring the meaning of suffering and discussing with members that the purpose of life is not to escape from suffering and enjoy pleasure, but to seek meaning in life, which gives it meaning; helping to reevaluate life's priorities and experiences; helping to accept responsibility for giving <u>meaning to life's experiences.</u>	The Meaning of Life	Eighth
Reviewing and revising the topics discussed; gaining new perspectives; 1- Life and death are interdependent and living cannot be postponed; 2- Behind every experience, there is a specific personal meaning, and the individual has unconditional freedom to choose this meaning; 3- Each of us is alone in existence and no relationship can erase our loneliness, but we can share each other's loneliness and establish a deep and meaningful relationship.	Summary	Ninth
Examining the group process from beginning to end; exploring members' feelings towards each other; assessing members' level of achievement of their goals and expectations; administering a post-test; acknowledging and concluding the group.	Conclusion	Tenth

Method of Implementation

After the intervention group pre-test was conducted for 10 90-minute sessions, the intervention to familiarize oneself with existential concerns was conducted in a group setting. No intervention was applied to the control group. After completing these sessions, a post-test was administered to both the intervention and control groups. During the sessions, the intervention group was advised to repeat their assignments and exercises in addition to the training sessions, and feedback was obtained from the individuals at the beginning of each session. The participation of women on the verge of divorce in this project was voluntary, and due care was taken regarding

the confidentiality of the questionnaires completed by the individuals. For this purpose, the information related to these individuals was analyzed anonymously and only with an identification code, and the group members were asked to express their consent to participate in the research and their commitment to comply with the necessary rules by signing a treatment contract. The members were also assured that the questionnaire information would only be used for research purposes. The statistical method of analysis of covariance, Shapiro-Wilk, Levene and M-box tests and SPSS software were used for data analysis, and the significance levels were 0.05 and 0.01.

Findings

The mean and standard deviation of the age of the participants in the experimental group were 35.93 and 7.45, respectively, and the control group was 35.06 and 8.40. Using the independent t-test showed that there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of age ($P < 0.05$, $F = 0.32(28)$). The level of education of 1 participant in the experimental group was a diploma, 9 participants had a bachelor's degree and 5 participants had a master's degree. The level of education of 2 participants in the control group was a diploma, 10 participants had a bachelor's degree and 3 participants had a master's degree. Using the Pearson chi-square test ($P < 0.05$, $0.87(2) = 0.87(2)$) showed that there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of education.

Table 2. Descriptive findings related to the components of meaning in life in the experimental and control groups

Post-test		Pre-test		Group	
S-W(sig)	SD ±M	S-W(sig)	SD ±M		
0/901(Ns)	2/66 ± 19/73	0/972(Ns)	± 15/80 2/65	Group	The existence of meaning
0/918(Ns)	2/28 ± 17/27	0/944(Ns)	± 16/20 2/54	Control	
0/959(Ns)	2/43 ± 19/20	0/925(Ns)	± 14/28 2/39	Test	Searchin g for meaning
0/902(Ns)	2/90 ± 13/15	0/912(Ns)	± 12/60 2/47	Control	

.Note: M; mean, SD; standard deviation, S-W; Shapiro-Wilk index, Ns; not significant

Table 2 shows that the Shapiro-Wilk index for both components of the meaning of life in both groups and in both pre-test and post-test stages is abnormal at the 0.05 level. This result indicates that the assumption of normal distribution of data in both experimental and control groups and in both pre-test and post-test stages is established. Before testing the hypotheses, the assumption of homogeneity of variance-covariance was examined using the "Box's M" statistic, and the results showed that the assumption is valid among the data of the present study (Box's M = 1.80, ($P = 0.646$, $F = 0.56$)). In addition, the result of the Bartlett sphericity test with 2 degrees of freedom was significant at the 0.01 level ($\chi^2 = 14.36$). Therefore, multivariate analysis of covariance was appropriate for the meaning of life among the experimental and control groups.

Analysis of covariance was performed and the results showed that the F value (Wilks Lambda = 0.430, $\eta^2 = 0.570$, $P = 0.001$, $F = (25 \text{ and } 2)16.56$) was significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that at least one of the components of meaning in life has changed under the influence of the implementation of the independent variable in the groups. To clarify this issue, Table 4-8 shows the results of one-way analysis of covariance in testing the effect of the independent variable on the components of meaning in life.

Table 3. Results of one-way covariance analysis in testing the effect of independent variables on the components of meaning in life.

η^2	p	F	Mean squared error	Between-group mean squares	Dependent variable
0/239	0/001	8/14	6/01	48/92	The existence of meaning
0/545	0/001	31/09	6/51	202/53	The search for meaning

Based on the results of the above table, the implementation of the independent variables affected the components of meaning ($P < 0.01$, $(F 26 \text{ and } 1) = 8.14$) and meaning search ($P < 0.01$, $(F 26 \text{ and } 1) = 31.09$) at a significance level of 0.01. In the following, the use of the Bonferroni post hoc test showed that the implementation of the independent variable of meaning ($P < 0.01$, $SE = 0.95$, $\Delta\bar{x} = 2.72$) and meaning search ($P < 0.01$, $SE = 0.99$, $\Delta\bar{x} = 5.53$) increased in the experimental group compared to the control group. Thus, it was concluded that familiarity with existential concerns increases the meaning of life in women on the verge of divorce.

Table 4. Descriptive findings related to emotional self-regulation dimensions in the experimental and control groups

Post-test		Pre-test		Group	Emotional self-regulation
S-W(sig)	SD \pm M	S-W(sig)	SD \pm M		
0/964(Ns)	4/84 \pm 23/00	0/936(Ns)	4/12 \pm 29/46	Test	Negative strategies
0/911(Ns)	4/48 \pm 29/40	0/957(Ns)	3/76 \pm 29/13	Control	
0/904(Ns)	6/67 \pm 34/82	0/890(Ns)	5/30 \pm 27/40	Test	Positive strategies
0/928(Ns)	5/74 \pm 26/60	0/943(Ns)	6/11 \pm 26/53	Control	

Note: M; Mean, SD; Standard Deviation, S-W; Shapiro-Wilk Index, Ns; Not Significant

Table 4 shows that the Shapiro-Wilk Index of both emotional self-regulation dimensions in the pre- and post-test stages and in both groups is not significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that the distribution of data related to each of the two emotional self-regulation dimensions is normal.

The assumption of homogeneity of variance-covariance among the data was valid (Box's $M = 0.33$, $(P = 0.959, F = 0.12)$). The result of Bartlett's sphericity test was also significant with 2 degrees of freedom at the 0.01 level ($\chi^2 = 21.08$). Therefore, multivariate analysis of covariance was appropriate for the dimensions of emotional self-regulation between the experimental and control groups. Analysis of covariance was performed and the results showed that the F value (Wilks Lambda = 0.456, $\eta^2 = 0.544$, $P = 0.001$, $F = 15.93$ (25 and 2)) is significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that at least one of the two dimensions of emotional self-regulation has changed under the influence of familiarity with existential concerns in the groups. Table 4-12 Results of one-way analysis of covariance in testing the effect of the independent variable on the dimensions of self-regulation

Table 5. Results of one-way covariance analysis in testing the effect of the independent variable on dimensions of emotional self-regulation

η^2	p	F	Mean squared	Between-group	Dependent
----------	---	---	--------------	---------------	-----------

			error	mean squares	variable
0/374	0/001	15/53	20/24	314/69	Negative strategies
0/317	0/001	12/06	39/10	47/25	Positive strategies

Note: At all levels of the dependent variable, the group degree of freedom is 1 and the error degree of freedom is 26.

Based on the results of the above table, the implementation of the independent variables affected negative strategies ($P < 0.01$, ($F = 15.53$ and 26) and positive strategies ($P < 0.01$, ($F = 12.06$ and 26)) at a significance level of 0.01. In the following, the use of the Bonferroni post hoc test showed that the implementation of the independent variable reduced the use of negative emotional self-regulation strategies ($P < 0.01$, $SE = 1.65$, $\Delta\bar{x} = 6.51$) in the experimental group and increased the use of positive strategies ($P < 0.01$, $SE = 2.29$, $\Delta\bar{x} = 7.96$) in women on the verge of divorce. Thus, it was concluded that familiarity with existential concerns improves emotional self-regulation in women on the verge of divorce.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study showed that familiarity with existential concerns increases the meaning of life in women on the verge of divorce.

According to the existential perspective, choosing a response to life's data is freedom and creates a positive existential perspective. According to this approach, gaining knowledge of the inevitable conflicts presented in life leads to awareness and power (Lontal, 2017). The existential approach does not try to eliminate chaos, but rather, by empowering individuals to deal with personal problems and search for meaning and utilizing individuals' capacity to find and make meaning, it helps individuals to restore purpose, faith, and hope in their dilemmas and provides the necessary solutions for the individual to overcome personal problems and anxieties and build a worthwhile life (Wang, 2010). This approach encourages individuals to face it, accept it, and learn to enjoy and use it. In this approach, stopping people from the capacity for anxiety means stopping them from living themselves (Vanderzen, 2012). Existential psychotherapy training, and in general all existential approaches, strive to familiarize people with the real meanings of life. This training program considers the meaning of life as a fundamental principle in human relationships. The therapist teaches them to scrutinize their lives, their problems, failures, and crises, and find their meanings in them. He also teaches them to review their past experiences and remember the moments when they thoroughly enjoyed life in order to be able to remember their meaning. This makes people meditate deeply on their meanings and realize that many of their meanings are not real (Lantz, 2004). In general, it can be said that having an existential meaning in life acts as a buffer against the changes in life. So that having meaning creates the thought in the minds of women who received this treatment that they accept their worries as a normal event in life and have optimal cognitive adaptation to their worries by changing their outlook and attitude and giving new meaning to the changes. In the process of existential therapy intervention, the individual achieves the awareness that although they cannot change the real and difficult conditions of life, they can change the methods of coping with it and move from the widespread worry and anxiety that are components of lack of mental health to the flourishing and exaltation of their individuality by giving meaning to their own way of being. Throughout the treatment process, their worries and negative views on life and changing this view were recognized and examined, since this method helps the group members who are experiencing inefficiency in personal and social relationships to change their current values and create values appropriate to their situation by trying to create creativity, change their attitude and worldview, and create new values.

The results of the present study showed that familiarity with existential concerns improves emotional

self-regulation in women on the verge of divorce. In existential psychotherapy, confronting each of the ultimate concerns confronts the individual with a type of terror known as existential anxiety. According to the existential approach, the way a person processes these internal conflicts and the decisions they make as a result determine their current and future circumstances. The most important time in existential therapy is the present and focusing on it (Lieberman & Havens, 2002). Existential psychotherapy focuses on free will, autonomy, and the search for meaning within the individual. This approach emphasizes the individual's capacity to make rational decisions and reach their maximum potential. According to this view, all individuals have the capacity for self-awareness and must continually reinvent themselves, because the meaning of life is constantly changing. According to experts in this field, existential psychotherapy, at its best, fairly and honestly confronts the main concerns of life, including loneliness, suffering, and purposelessness. Specific concerns are rooted in each individual's experiences, but existential psychotherapists believe that general and universal concerns include death, isolation, freedom, and emptiness. Therefore, existential psychotherapy focuses on the anxiety that occurs when facing these existential problems, and the therapist's role is to foster the person's responsibility for decision-making (Bovins, 2021), thus preparing them to make appropriate decisions and take responsibility for their own concerns. Because in this therapy, the individual is helped to reach a deeper and broader level of awareness of their existential structure and to cope effectively when faced with the realities of life, and the individual is encouraged to move out of the state of passivity and accept their freedom and choose their own attitude towards problems (Hoffman et al., 2020). In this way, women who are familiar with existential concerns and receive existential psychotherapy will learn to choose healthier emotional regulation strategies for events by choosing their attitude instead of rumination and blaming about problems. For example, they will express more positive and adaptive coping responses to events by accepting them and evaluating them positively.

Every study has its own limitations. In the present study, a self-report instrument was used, which may have affected the results of the study; Therefore, it is suggested that other methods such as interviews be used in future research. It is suggested to officials, clinicians, and therapists that public education with an approach to familiarizing with existential concerns be.

References

- Amiri Seif al-Dini Kohbanani, Farzaneh., & Saber, Susan. (2018). Comparison of existential anxiety and meaning of life in patients with asthma and patients with diabetes. *Journal of Health Research*, 4(2), 128-120.
- Hassani, Jafar. (2011). Psychometric properties of the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 3(7), 83-73.
- Hassani, Jafar., & Mir-Aghaei, Ali-Mohammad. (2012). The relationship between emotion regulation strategies and suicidal ideation. *Contemporary Psychology*, 7(1), 72-61.
- Giti Pasand, Zahra., & Farahbakhsh, Kiyomars., & Esmaili, Masoumeh., & Zakai, Mohammad-Saeed. (2015). Components of meaning of life in couples seeking divorce. *Family Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 5(2), 79-50.
- Masrabadi, Javad., Jafarian, Sakineh., & Estavar, Negar. (2013). A study of the construct and diagnostic validity of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire in students. *Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 7(1), 90-83.
- Masrabadi, Javad., Jafarian, Sakineh., & Estavar, Negar. (2013). A study of the construct and diagnostic validity of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire in students. *Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 7(1), 90-93.
- Mahini, Shahram., Teymouri, Saeed., & Rahimi, Soosan. (2013). A comparison of cognitive emotion regulation strategies and thought-action fusion in couples seeking divorce and normal couples: with the mediation of gender. *Family Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 3(11), 377-355.

- Nazari, Ali Mohammad., & Yarahmadi, Hossein., & Zaharakar, Kianoush. (2014). The effect of group existential psychotherapy on marital satisfaction in women with type 2 diabetes. *Journal of Knowledge and Health*, 9(2), 14-20.
- Bowins, B. (2021). Chapter 16 - Existential psychotherapy. In B. Bowins (Ed.), *States and Processes for Mental Health* (pp. 145-150). Academic Press. [\[Link\]](#)
- Garnefski, N., Kraaij, V., & Spinhoven, P. (2001). Negative life events, cognitive emotion regulation and depression. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 30, 1311-1327.
- Heidenreich, T., Noyon, A., Worrell, M., & Menzies, R. (2021). Existential Approaches and Cognitive Behavior Therapy: Challenges and Potential. *International Journal of Cognitive Therapy*, 14(1), 209-234. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41811-020-00096-1>
- Hoffman, L., Ramey, B., & Silveira, D. (2020). Chapter 25 - Existential therapy, religion, and mindfulness. In K. E. Vail & C. Routledge (Eds.), *the Science of Religion, Spirituality, and Existentialism* (pp. 359-369). Academic Press. [\[Link\]](#)
- Jacob, C. J., McMonigle, M. E., & Metzger, N. (2014). Using Existential Themes in Couples Counseling: Addressing the “Why” as Well as the “How.” *The Family Journal*, 22(2), 240-244.
- Kalantar, S. M. (2011). Efficacy of Existential Freedom Training in Marital Satisfaction of Iranian Women. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 12.
- Kalantar, S. M. (2012). Effects of existential issues training on marital communication among Iranian women. *Psihologijske Teme*, 21(2), 213-224.
- Kalantar, S. M., Hassan, S., Kadir, R., & Abu Talib, M. (2012). Effects of Existential Issues Training on Marital Satisfaction among Iranian Women. *The New Educational Review*, 28, 29-38.
- Lantz, J. (1996). Basic concepts in existential psychotherapy with couples and families. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 18(4), 535-548. [\[Link\]](#)
- Lantz, J. (2004). Research and Evaluation Issues in Existential Psychotherapy. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 34(4), 331-340. [\[Link\]](#)
- Lieberman, P. B., & Havens, L. L. (2002). Existential Psychotherapy. In M. Hersen & W. Sledge (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Psychotherapy* (pp. 741-754). Academic Press. [\[Link\]](#)
- Loewenthal, L. (2017). *Existential Psychotherapy and Counselling after Postmodernism*. CRC Press. [\[Link\]](#)
- Lorenz, F. O., Wickrama, K. A., Conger, R. D., & Elder, G. H., Jr (2006). The short-term and decade-long effects of divorce on women's midlife health. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 47(2), 111–125. [\[Link\]](#)
- Lybbert, R., Ryland, S., & Bean, R. (2019). Existential interventions for adolescent suicidality: Practical interventions to target the root causes of adolescent distress. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 100, 98-104.
- Marinescu, I. (2016). Divorce: What does learning have to do with it? *Labour Economics*, 38, 90-105.
- Mulej Bratec, S., Xie, X., Schmid, G., Doll, A., Schilbach, L., Zimmer, C.,... Sorg, C. (2015). Cognitive emotion regulation enhances aversive prediction error activity while reducing emotional responses. *Neuroimage*, 123, 138-148.
- Sbarra, D. A., & Coan, J. A. (2017). Divorce and health: good data in need of better theory. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 13, 91-95.
- Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, M. (2006). The meaning in life questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53(1), 80–93. [\[Link\]](#)
- Wong, P. T. P. (2010). Meaning therapy: An integrative and positive existential psychotherapy. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy: On the Cutting Edge of Modern Developments in Psychotherapy*, 40(2), 85-93.
- Yılmaz, O., Mırçık, A. B., Kunduz, M., Çombaş, M., Öztürk, A., Deveci, E., & Kırpınar, İ. (2019). Effects of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Existential Psychotherapy and Supportive Counselling on Facial Emotion Recognition Among Patients with Mild or Moderate Depression. *Psychiatry investigation*, 16(7), 491–503.