

Forgiveness therapy on depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress for women es...

[Sociology](#), [Bullying](#)



Enright and Reed (2006) discussed varied studies on spousal psychological abuse, with the various researchers concluding multiple negative psychological outcomes on woman who were in emotionally abusive spousal relationships. In the study however the authors approach the long-term adverse psychological consequences, emotionally abused, women struggle with after being in a relationship with an abusive spouse (Enright & Reed). Focus is on the outcomes forgiveness therapy (FT) has on psychological problems, specifically depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress (Enright & Reed). Enright and Reed (2006) hypothesized that participants of the FT study would benefit from increased self-esteem and effective decision making, while decreasing levels of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress. FT results compared with results of the alternate therapy (AT) participants; which were inclusive of “ anger validation, assertiveness, and interpersonal skill building” (Enright & Reed, 2006, p. 921) with no focus on improving the women’s feelings of resentment towards the abusive spouse. The FT study included 20 women, all of whom a spouse or lover psychologically abused; participants were divorced or separated from the abusive partner for two or more years (Enright & Reed). Results included pretest, posttest, and follow-up measures, using the same variables, for both the FT and AT groups. FT participants, as compared to the AT participants, showed considerable improvements in areas measured during the study i. e., decreased symptoms of anxiety, depression and posttraumatic stress. The conclusion implies that though more research is imperative in the study of the effects of FT, this initial empirical study comparing FT and AT treatments showed FT participants appeared to have done better psychologically in the

follow up measures than that of the AT participants, whom still struggled with psychological issues at follow up. Interaction

Despite the importance of exploring the effects of spousal emotional abuse Enright and Reed (2006) encountered minimal treatments that were therapeutically effective in relating to the issue of such abuse and its residual effects. The authors took a bold step in taking the initiative to research such a pertinent issue beyond previous research, which merely scaled the surface, never delving in deep enough to create empirical evidence in gaining a conclusive therapeutic method of treatment. As the FT and AT studies were compared in accordance with the research, a “therapeutic intervener” (Enright & Reed, 2006, p. 923) facilitated, participants in both groups commenced in comparable therapeutic group sessions. FT and AT participants interacted in weekly hourly sessions; however FT groups used the Enright forgiveness model and AT participants groups were based on their present circumstances taking into account their abusive past, led discussions (Enright & Reed).

Having facilitated group sessions as a case manager, the effectiveness of Enright and Reed’s “therapeutic intervener” is a known variable; the interest of this reviewer however has been peaked, in regards to learning more about the Enright forgiveness model. The authors use of varied methods of design, ensuring that the experimental and control groups were similar, was ideal for this type of research; leaving the reader with clarity and conciseness in reviewing the study. Participants in the study varied in ethnicity, education, employment and marital status; all participants were volunteers, having

responded to flyers posted or newspaper ads regarding the FT study. Having only volunteers as participants in the study, leads one to believe that readiness for emotional healing and growth also contributed to the successfulness of the participants. Application

Problem

A female client in a residential substance abuse program is working on learning to be a parent to her 13-year-old daughter now that she is clean and sober. The client is struggling with parenting out of guilt, due to issues with being able to forgive herself for the mistreatment of her daughter while she was in active addiction. Therapeutic Intervention

Enright and Reed (2006) described in their research that FT correlates the emotionally abused spouses, ability to forgive the offense with the treatment of the psychological effects that they endure. Multiple screening assessments were also used, with multitudinous of the surveys, inventories and scales consisting of self-report questionnaires'. Using this approach the counselor will operate from this theory. The counselor will assist the client in forgiving herself, with the treatment of her addiction and the effects of the consequences that the client and her child endured.

Furthermore the counselor will treat the client from the premise of FT; focusing on the importance of the abusive parent forgiving herself as a pertinent step in the process of healing and or progress in making clear decisions for herself and her child. Inclusively the counselor will encourage the child to relinquish the cynicism towards the parent, as this jeopardizes

her capacity to heal emotionally. Individual sessions would be facilitated using “ participant-initiated” (Enright & Reed, 2006, p. 923) allowing client and child to both tell their story. Counselor will also facilitate family sessions, using “ therapeutic intervener-participant interactions” (p. 923). Further research would be completed on the “ Enright forgiveness process model” (Enright & Reed) to assess the usefulness of this treatment in counseling this client.

References

Enright, E. D., & Reed, G. L. (2006). The effects of forgiveness therapy on depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress for women after spousal emotional abuse. *The Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 74*(5), 920-929.