

## Comparison of the Effectiveness of Narrative Therapy and Structural Couple Therapy on Marital Burnout and Negative Emotions in Couples with a Physically Disabled Spouse in Ahvaz

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The statement “Marital relationships constitute one of the most fundamental and enduring social institutions...” is conceptually strong, but currently relies on a broad claim. Consider tightening this paragraph by explicitly linking these general assertions to the specific population of couples coping with physical disability earlier in the section.

In the sentence “Physical disability introduces profound structural changes into the marital system...”, please provide a more concrete operational definition of “structural changes” and briefly indicate which domains {role, intimacy, economic functioning, etc.} are most directly affected in your target population.

The paragraph beginning “Parallel to narrative approaches, structural couple therapy...” would benefit from a brief citation of Minuchin’s original theoretical propositions to anchor the intervention model more firmly in its primary theoretical framework.

The research gap is clearly articulated; however, the sentence “Given the psychological vulnerability of couples living with physical disability...” could be strengthened by explicitly stating why Ahvaz represents a uniquely relevant or under-studied context for this investigation.

In the paragraph interpreting Table 1, consider explicitly reporting the absolute and relative percentage reductions in marital burnout and negative emotions to enhance clinical interpretability of the results.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

### 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the paragraph describing inclusion criteria, the restriction to ages 20–40 years is not theoretically justified. Please explain the rationale for this age range and how it affects the external validity of the findings.

The sentence “the scale was modified to a five-point format” requires stronger justification, as scale modification can affect psychometric integrity. Please provide evidence or citations supporting this adaptation and describe whether validity was reassessed after modification.

In the paragraph discussing the Emotional Expressiveness Questionnaire, please clarify which specific items composed the negative emotion subscale and whether any items were removed or altered beyond response scaling.

The narrative intervention description is comprehensive; however, the phrase “participants revisited unresolved traumatic experiences” lacks operational detail. Please specify how trauma work was conducted safely within an eight-session protocol and whether any standardized trauma-informed procedures were followed.

The sentence “The final phase of treatment focused on financial management as a core structural component” introduces an important element. Please justify theoretically why financial management was emphasized in a structural framework and how it relates to marital burnout and negative emotions.

While the statistical approach is appropriate, the paragraph beginning “Prior to conducting the main inferential analyses...” should explicitly report the actual test statistics for Mauchly’s test and Greenhouse–Geisser epsilon values for full reproducibility.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.