



# The Effectiveness of Emotion Efficacy Therapy on Self-control and Intimacy of Women Injured by trauma Husband Infidelity

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## Abstract

**Aim:** This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of emotion efficacy therapy on self-control and intimacy of women injured by trauma husband infidelity. **Methods:** The research method was quasi-experimental and pretest-posttest design with two-months follow-up. The statistical population was the women injured by trauma husband infidelity who referred to counseling centers in Isfahan city in 2019, after screening with the post-traumatic stress disorder measurement scale (Wedders et al., 1994), 30 people were selected by purposive sampling and they were randomly replaced in two experimental and control groups (15 people in each group). The research tools were self-control questionnaire (Tangeny et al., 2004) and intimacy (Walker & Thompson, 1983). The data were analyzed using repeated measures analysis of variance. The experimental group underwent 8 sessions of 90-minute emotion efficacy therapy intervention by Matthew et al. (2016) but the control group received no treatment. **Results:** The results showed the effect of emotion efficacy therapy on self-control ( $P < 0/001$ ,  $F = 22/479$ ) and intimacy ( $P < 0/001$ ,  $F = 57/14$ ) in post-test, and stability of this effect was in the follow-up. **Conclusion:** According to the results of this research, emotional efficiency therapy can be used to improve the self-control and intimacy of women Injured by trauma husband's infidelity. **Keywords:** *Emotion Efficacy Therapy, self-control, Intimacy, Trauma, Husband Infidelity.*

## Introduction

Family is one of the effective environments for human physical and mental health, and one of the factors that disrupts the stability of the family system and its health is breaking the marital contract. Breaking the marital contract is the most important factor that threatens the performance, stability and continuity of marital relationships (Mark et al., 2011). In other words, breach of contract; Breaking the commitment of exclusive sexual and emotional relationships within the framework of the marital bond (Atapour et al., 2020). Statistics show that contract breaking has been increasing among married people in recent years; More than 60-30% of men and 50-20% of women have participated in at least one extramarital relationship

In Iran, there are no exact statistics in this field, but some studies have mentioned this issue. In general, studies confirm that extramarital relationships are increasing in Iran and cause many psychological problems in the spouse (Aghagadi et al., 2017). Bravo and Lampkin (2010) state that unfulfilled needs and defects in empathic response and fatigue are one of the effective factors in the event of breach of contract, which are all factors that have a direct effect on reducing marital satisfaction. According to evolutionary theory; Men are more motivated to break the contract in order to successfully increase their fertility, while women are more involved in emotions in breaking the contract. This theory states that men are more likely to enter extramarital relationships and women are more vulnerable (Wells et al., 2021).

Women affected by husband's breach of contract will face psychological damages such as depression, anxiety, serious damage in marital relations, marital intimacy, and marital commitment. Some researches have shown that women affected by the trauma of a spouse's breach of contract have lower mental health than normal people (Darab et al., 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to use effective treatment for these people. In modern approaches, the cause of emotional disorders is attributed to a deficiency in cognitive and emotional control. The inability to control negative emotions caused by negative thoughts and beliefs leads to the use of ineffective coping methods. Self-control can be an effective method for mental and psychological health, in regulating emotions with a wide range of psychological problems.

One of the treatment models that can be effective in healing and treating the trauma of breach of contract and reducing the problems that have arisen is the treatment based on emotional efficiency. Therapy based on emotional efficiency is a transdiagnostic therapy that integrates the components of therapy based on acceptance and commitment, dialectical behavior therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy.

Treatment based on emotional efficiency, focusing on three meta-diagnostic mechanisms of significant distress intolerance, high emotional avoidance, and high rumination and worry, which play the largest role in emotional dysregulation, targets these mechanisms (Claudis et al., 2020).

Therefore, this research was conducted with the aim of investigating the effectiveness of emotional efficiency therapy on self-control and intimacy of

women affected by the trauma of breaking the contract by their spouse to answer the following questions.

1. Is the treatment based on emotional efficiency effective on the self-control of women affected by the trauma of the spouse's breach of contract in the post-examination and follow-up phase?
2. Is the treatment based on emotional efficiency effective on the intimacy of women affected by the trauma of the spouse's breach of contract in the post-examination and follow-up phase?

### Method

The research method was quasi-experimental and pretest-posttest design with two-months follow-up. The statistical population was the women injured by trauma husband infidelity who referred to counseling centers in Isfahan city in 2019, after screening with the post-traumatic stress disorder measurement scale (Wedders et al., 1994), 30 people were selected by purposive sampling and they were randomly replaced in two experimental and control groups (15 people in each group). The research tools were self-control questionnaire (Tangeny et al., 2004) and intimacy (Walker & Thompson, 1983). The data were analyzed using repeated measures analysis of variance. The experimental group underwent 8 sessions of 90-minute emotion efficacy therapy intervention by Matthew et al. (2016) but the control group received no treatment.

### Results

The mean scores of self-control and intimacy in the intervention group (treatment based on emotional efficiency) increased more in the post-test and follow-up stages than in the pre-test. Before performing the analyzes and related presuppositions, the results of examining and comparing the demographic characteristics of the participants have been done to control these variables. The results of the correlation analysis showed that the relationship between this demographic variable of age and duration of marriage with all research variables is not significant and there was no need to control it in the analyses. The subjects of the research do not differ significantly from each other in any of the research variables based on the level of education and the number of children.

In the inter-experiment analysis, the mean scores of the variables of self-control and intimacy in the two experimental groups (treatment based on emotional efficiency) have a significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ). The results showed that (86.9%) of the individual differences in the self-control variable and (72.9%) in the intimacy variable are related to the difference between the two groups. Based on the results of intra-subject analysis, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of both variables of self-control and intimacy in the post-test and follow-up phases ( $p < 0.001$ ). The results showed that the interaction effect of time and group membership is also significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). It shows that the changes in the post-test and follow-up stages were significant in each of the groups. The level of difference between groups in the self-control variable is equal to (46.4%) and in the intimacy variable is equal to (68.7%).

In the post-test stages as well as the follow-up, there is a significant difference between the control group and the treatment group based on emotional efficiency ( $p < 0.001$ ) in both variables of self-control and intimacy. It shows that the effect of treatment based on emotional efficiency on improving self-control and intimacy in

the post-test is (81.6 percent) and (77.8 percent), respectively. Also, the effect of this treatment package on the variables of self-control and intimacy in the follow-up phase is equal to (89.5%) and (80.2%) respectively.

### **Conclusion**

In a general conclusion, it can be said that treatment based on emotional efficiency has had a significant effect on increasing self-control and intimacy in women affected by husband's breach of contract in the post-test phase, and this effect remained in the follow-up phase as well.

One of the limitations of this research is that it was carried out in Isfahan city in 2019. Therefore, the generalization of the results to other regions requires the investigation of the cultural context of each region. In addition to that, the level of education in this study was considered to be a diploma, which did not consider women with lower education, the sample in this study was volunteer women affected by the breach of contract by their husbands who were living together. Based on the limitations, it is suggested that women with lower education should be investigated in future researches. The effectiveness of treatment based on emotional efficiency should also be investigated on women who have been divorced due to breach of contract or men who have faced breach of contract by their spouses. The effectiveness of treatment based on emotional efficiency should be investigated in other cities and especially on both couples at the same time.

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