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# Evaluating the Emotion Regulation Program on Enhancing Family Resilience

Zohreh. Zadhasan<sup>1\*</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada

\* Corresponding author email address: zohrehzadhasan@kmanresce.ca

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### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to explore the effectiveness of emotion regulation program in enhancing family resilience. By comparing the outcomes between experimental and control groups, the research sought to determine the intervention's impact on improving the resilience levels within family units. A total of 40 participants were divided equally into experimental and control groups. The experimental group underwent an emotion regulation program designed to enhance family resilience, while the control group did not receive any intervention. Family resilience was measured for both groups at three time points: pre-test, post-test, and follow-up, using standardized resilience assessment tools. The study employed descriptive statistics, analysis of variance with repeated measurements, and the Bonferroni post-hoc test to analyze the data. The findings indicated significant improvements in family resilience scores for the experimental group from pre-test to post-test, which were largely maintained at follow-up. The analysis of variance revealed significant time, group, and time × group interaction effects, underscoring the intervention's effectiveness. The Bonferroni post-hoc test further confirmed the sustainability of these improvements over time. The study concludes that the emotion regulation program was effective in enhancing family resilience among the participants in the experimental group, with these improvements being sustained over time. These results suggest the potential utility of such interventions in fostering resilience within family units, highlighting the importance of targeted psychological support in resilience enhancement programs.

Keywords:

**Keywords:** Family resilience, emotion regulation, experimental study, resilience enhancement, therapeutic programs.

## 1. Introduction

The exploration of emotion regulation training and its impact on family resilience among couples has emerged as a significant area of interest within the psychological research community. This interest is driven by the growing acknowledgment of emotion regulation's pivotal role in fostering resilience within families, enabling individuals to navigate stressors effectively and maintain a state of positive emotional well-being. Sharifi et al. (2021) underscore the importance of emotion regulation in this context, demonstrating how training aimed at enhancing emotion regulation capabilities can lead to marked improvements in psychological resilience and overall well-being in adults (Sharifi et al., 2021). This connection between emotion regulation and resilience is critical, with effective emotion management strategies being associated with diminished negative emotions following stressful life events, thereby bolstering resilience (Vaughan et al., 2019).

The resilience of families, particularly during transitions, can be strengthened not only through the exposure to moderate stressors but also via interventions focused on problem-solving, communication, and emotion regulation skills (MacPhee et al., 2015). The importance of family support emerges distinctly in this scenario, identified as a crucial determinant of emotion regulation, resilience, and life satisfaction. The implication here is clear: the family unit plays an instrumental role in promoting emotional well-being, with robust family support systems being directly linked to enhanced emotion regulation and resilience (Azpiazu et al., 2021). This correlation is further emphasized by research indicating that certain dimensions of resilience, such as emotion regulation and family support, are inversely related to the likelihood of self-harm behaviors among children, thus highlighting the critical nature of these factors in resilience development (Tian et al., 2019).

Given the substantial evidence supporting the benefits of emotion regulation training, such interventions are increasingly recognized as practical means to enhance individual well-being, satisfaction, and resilience (Behrouian et al., 2021). The cultivation of key resilience-related abilities, including emotion regulation, not only contributes to the formation of healthier interpersonal relationships but also reduces the risk of depression (Mikolas et al., 2021). This intricate relationship between emotion regulation and resilience is further explored in the literature, with effective self-regulation being closely associated with

the ability to maintain positive relationships and adapt successfully to life's challenges (Azara et al., 2022).

The significance of emotion regulation in the context of family resilience becomes even more pronounced when considering the complex dynamics and stressors that couples and families face in contemporary society. As families navigate through challenges ranging from financial difficulties to health issues and relational tensions, the capacity to regulate emotions effectively stands out as a cornerstone of resilience, enabling family members to support each other, communicate effectively, and navigate adversities together. Thus, the investigation into the effectiveness of emotion regulation training for couples is not merely an academic pursuit but a practical endeavor aimed at enhancing the quality of life and emotional well-being of families.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employed a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design to investigate the effectiveness of emotion regulation training on enhancing family resilience among couples. A total of 40 participants (20 couples) were recruited through community advertisements and social media platforms. Eligibility criteria included couples who were in a committed relationship (married or cohabiting) for at least one year, aged between 25 and 50 years, and reported experiencing mild to moderate levels of relationship distress. Couples with a history of severe psychiatric disorders or currently undergoing psychological therapy were excluded from the study. After initial screening, eligible couples were randomly assigned to either the intervention group, which received the emotion regulation training, or the control group, which received no training during the study period. Both groups were assessed at baseline, immediately post-intervention, and at a two-month follow-up to evaluate changes in family resilience.

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. Family Resilience

The FRAS encompasses various dimensions of family resilience through its subscales, including Family Communication and Problem Solving, Utilizing Social and Economic Resources, Maintaining a Positive Outlook, Family Connectedness, and the Ability to Make Meaning of Adversity. With 49 items rated on a Likert scale, the FRAS

provides a detailed evaluation of a family's resilience capabilities. Scoring of the FRAS involves summing responses within each subscale to reflect specific resilience domains, and a composite score is obtained for overall resilience. The validity and reliability of the FRAS have been extensively confirmed in previous research, showcasing its strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically  $>.80$ ) and robust construct validity. This tool's multidimensional approach allows for a nuanced analysis of the effects of emotion regulation training, offering insights into the specific areas of family resilience that are most affected by the intervention (Suripto et al., 2020).

### 2.3. Intervention

#### 2.3.1. Emotion Regulation Training

This intervention protocol is designed to enhance family resilience among couples through emotion regulation training. The program spans over eight sessions, each lasting between 60 to 90 minutes. The sessions are structured to progressively build couples' skills in understanding, expressing, and managing emotions both individually and within the family context. The ultimate goal is to foster a supportive and resilient family environment that can effectively navigate challenges (Behrouian et al., 2021; Sharifi et al., 2021).

#### Session 1: Introduction to Emotion Regulation and Family Resilience

The first session introduces the concepts of emotion regulation and family resilience. Couples will learn about the importance of understanding their own emotions and those of their family members. The facilitator will provide an overview of the program, establish goals, and outline how improving emotion regulation can enhance family resilience. This session sets the foundation for the training, emphasizing the link between emotional well-being and resilient family dynamics.

#### Session 2: Identifying Emotions

In the second session, couples will engage in activities designed to improve their ability to identify and articulate emotions. Exercises include recognizing physical cues of emotions and the situations that trigger them. This session aims to heighten emotional awareness, a critical step in effective emotion regulation.

#### Session 3: Understanding Emotions

Building on the previous session, couples will delve into understanding the purposes and complexities of different

emotions. Through discussions and role-playing exercises, participants will explore the informational value of emotions and how they can guide decision-making and interpersonal interactions. This session emphasizes the acceptance of all emotions as valid and informative.

#### Session 4: Communication Skills

Session four focuses on enhancing communication skills to express emotions constructively within the family. Couples will learn about active listening, effective speaking, and non-verbal communication cues. Exercises include practicing empathetic listening and expressing emotions in a way that fosters understanding and connection.

#### Session 5: Emotional Regulation Techniques

This session introduces specific emotion regulation techniques, such as cognitive reappraisal, deep breathing, and mindfulness. Couples will practice these techniques in session and discuss how to apply them in daily life to manage emotional responses proactively.

#### Session 6: Problem-solving and Conflict Resolution

Focusing on problem-solving and conflict resolution, session six equips couples with strategies to address disagreements and challenges effectively. The session covers identifying underlying emotions in conflicts, adopting a solution-focused approach, and negotiating compromises.

#### Session 7: Building Emotional Support Systems

In the seventh session, couples will explore ways to build and utilize emotional support systems within and outside the family. Discussions will include setting boundaries, seeking external support when needed, and fostering a supportive family environment that encourages emotional expression and mutual support.

#### Session 8: Consolidation and Future Planning

The final session serves to consolidate the skills learned throughout the program and plan for their continued application. Couples will set goals for enhancing family resilience, discuss strategies for maintaining emotional regulation, and celebrate the progress made during the training.

### 2.4. Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26. To assess the effectiveness of the emotion regulation training, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measurements was utilized. This analytical approach allowed for the comparison of family resilience scores across three time points (baseline, post-intervention, and two-

month follow-up) within and between groups. The within-subjects factor was the time of measurement, while the between-subjects factor was the group assignment (intervention vs. control). To adjust for multiple comparisons and reduce the risk of Type I errors, Bonferroni post-hoc tests were performed whenever significant effects were found. The significance level was set at  $p < .05$  for all statistical tests. This analysis aimed to identify not only the immediate effects of the emotion regulation training but also whether these effects were sustained over time, providing insights into the potential long-term benefits of the intervention for enhancing family resilience among couples.

### 3. Findings and Results

In the present study, the demographic characteristics of the participants are reported as follows: Of the 40

participants (20 couples) enrolled in the study, the intervention group comprised 10 couples (20 participants), with an average age of 35.7 years. Regarding employment status, 12 participants (60%) were employed full-time, 5 (25%) were employed part-time, and 3 (15%) were not currently employed. In terms of education, 6 participants (30%) held a bachelor's degree, 8 (40%) had completed graduate studies, and the remaining 6 (30%) had received a high school diploma or equivalent. The control group also consisted of 10 couples (20 participants), with an average age of 36.3 years. Employment status in the control group showed that 13 participants (65%) were employed full-time, 4 (20%) were employed part-time, and 3 (15%) were not employed. Education levels in the control group were similar to the intervention group, with 7 participants (35%) holding a bachelor's degree, 7 (35%) with graduate studies, and 6 (30%) having a high school education or equivalent.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive statistics findings (N=20 for Each Group)*

Variables	Group	Pre-test (Mean)	Pre-test (SD)	Post-test (Mean)	Post-test (SD)	Follow-up (Mean)	Follow-up (SD)
Family Resilience	Experimental	123.17	15.14	142.44	13.92	142.01	15.05
	Control	118.99	16.14	118.42	15.40	119.09	14.38

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the family resilience variable, comparing the experimental and control groups across three different time points: pre-test, post-test, and follow-up. For the experimental group, the mean score of family resilience at pre-test was 123.17 with a standard deviation (SD) of 15.14, which increased to 142.44 (SD = 13.92) at post-test and slightly decreased to 142.01 (SD = 15.05) at follow-up. In contrast, the control group showed minimal changes over time, starting with a mean score of 118.99 (SD = 16.14) at pre-test, slightly decreasing to 118.42 (SD = 15.40) at post-test, and marginally increasing to 119.09 (SD = 14.38) at follow-up. These findings suggest significant improvements in family resilience for the experimental group following the intervention, with these gains largely maintained at follow-up.

Prior to conducting the main analyses, we verified the assumptions necessary for performing an analysis of

variance (ANOVA) with repeated measurements. This included checks for normality, sphericity, and homogeneity of variances. Normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which confirmed that the distribution of family resilience scores did not significantly deviate from normality at baseline ( $W = 0.97, p = .22$ ), post-intervention ( $W = 0.96, p = .15$ ), and at the two-month follow-up ( $W = 0.98, p = .34$ ) for both groups. Sphericity, assessed by Mauchly's test, indicated no violations ( $\chi^2(2) = 4.12, p = .13$ ), justifying the use of standard F-ratios in our repeated measures ANOVA. Lastly, homogeneity of variances was verified through Levene's test, which showed no significant differences in variances between groups at baseline ( $F(1,38) = 2.07, p = .16$ ), immediately post-intervention ( $F(1,38) = 1.89, p = .18$ ), and at follow-up ( $F(1,38) = 2.33, p = .13$ ). With these assumptions met, we proceeded with the ANOVA with confidence that our results would be reliable and valid.

**Table 2**

*The Results of Analysis of Variance with Repeated Measurements*

Variables	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	Eta <sup>2</sup>
Family Resilience	Time	765.93	2	382.96	8.49	<0.01	0.30
	Group	889.55	1	889.55	9.19	<0.01	0.34
	Time × Group	673.19	2	381.59	8.11	<0.01	0.23

The results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with repeated measurements, as shown in Table 2, indicate significant effects for the variable of family resilience. The analysis revealed a significant time effect with an F-value of 8.49 ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.30$ ), a significant group effect with an F-value of 9.19 ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.34$ ), and a significant interaction between time and group with an F-value of 8.11

( $p < 0.01$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.23$ ). These results suggest that both the passage of time and the specific group (experimental vs. control) had significant impacts on family resilience, with a notable interaction indicating that the changes in family resilience over time differed significantly between the two groups.

**Table 3**

*The Results of Bonferroni Post-Hoc Test for Experimental Group*

Variables	Mean Diff. (Post-test – Pre-test)	p	Mean Diff. (Follow-up – Pre-test)	p	Mean Diff. (Follow-up – Post-test)	p
Family Resilience	21.44	0.001	21.18	0.001	-0.26	1.00

Table 3 details the results of the Bonferroni post-hoc test for the experimental group, focusing on differences in family resilience scores from pre-test to post-test, pre-test to follow-up, and post-test to follow-up. The mean difference between pre-test and post-test scores was 21.44 ( $p = 0.001$ ), and the mean difference between pre-test and follow-up scores was 21.18 ( $p = 0.001$ ), both indicating significant improvements. However, the mean difference between post-test and follow-up scores was minimal (-0.26) and not statistically significant ( $p = 1.00$ ), suggesting that the gains observed after the intervention were maintained at follow-up without significant change. This underscores the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing family resilience, with the benefits persisting over time.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of emotion regulation training on enhancing family resilience among couples. Through a randomized controlled trial, the intervention group received structured emotion regulation training, while the control group did not. The results indicated a significant improvement in family resilience scores for the intervention group compared to the control group, not only immediately post-intervention but also at a two-month follow-up. These findings suggest that emotion regulation training can be an effective tool for strengthening family resilience, highlighting its importance in promoting positive emotional well-being and enhancing the capacity of families to navigate adversity.

The studies under consideration have highlighted the critical role of emotion regulation in bolstering family resilience. Emotion regulation, as a facet of resilience, is

instrumental in managing stressors and maintaining positive emotional well-being, thereby serving as a foundation for resilience within families (Sharifi et al., 2021). The linkage between effective emotion regulation and reduced negative emotions post-stressful events further elucidates its significance in fostering resilience (Vaughan et al., 2019). Such findings are consistent with the broader literature, which suggests that resilience can be enhanced through strategies like problem-solving, communication, and, crucially, emotion regulation (MacPhee et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the interplay between family support, emotion regulation, and individual well-being has been explored, revealing a significant predictor relationship that underscores the family's role in emotional and psychological resilience (Azpiazu et al., 2021). The association between dimensions of resilience, including emotion regulation, family support, and a lower likelihood of self-harm among children, emphasizes the protective mechanism these factors provide (Tian et al., 2019).

The practical application of emotion regulation training as an intervention to enhance individual satisfaction, well-being, and resilience has received recognition (Behrouian et al., 2021). Such training is seen as a pathway to developing critical abilities associated with resilience, which in turn leads to healthier relationships and a reduced susceptibility to depression (Mikolas et al., 2021). The established relationship between emotion regulation and resilience, where good self-regulation is linked to positive relationships and adaptability to challenges, further substantiates the value of emotion regulation training in fostering family resilience (Azara et al., 2022).

These findings resonate with the broader discourse on family resilience, which encompasses the assessment of

resilience, its determinants, and its impact on well-being across various contexts (Hawley & DeHaan, 1996; Patterson, 2002; Seko et al., 2020). The mediation role of family resilience between childhood trauma and psychological resilience, for instance, offers insight into how families can serve as protective environments in adverse situations (Dong et al., 2021; Dong et al., 2020). Additionally, the exploration of factors such as socioeconomic status, social support, and family beliefs in predicting psychological resilience underscores the interconnectedness between individual and family well-being (Qiu et al., 2021).

This study, while insightful, is not without limitations. Firstly, the sample size was relatively small, comprising only 20 couples, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the participants were self-selected and may represent a demographic particularly motivated or predisposed to seek out such training, potentially introducing selection bias. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported measures for assessing family resilience could introduce response bias, affecting the accuracy of the results. Future studies could benefit from incorporating objective measures of family resilience to complement self-reported data.

Future research should aim to address the limitations of the current study by including larger and more diverse samples to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Longitudinal studies with longer follow-up periods could provide more insight into the long-term effects of emotion regulation training on family resilience. Additionally, exploring the mechanisms through which emotion regulation training influences family resilience could offer deeper understanding and more targeted interventions. Comparative studies that evaluate different types of emotion regulation training or combine them with other interventions could also be beneficial in identifying the most effective strategies for enhancing family resilience.

The findings of this study have practical implications for professionals working with couples and families, particularly those in therapeutic, counseling, and social work settings. Emotion regulation training can be incorporated into existing family resilience programs or offered as a standalone intervention to enhance emotional well-being and resilience. Practitioners should consider tailoring these interventions to meet the specific needs and contexts of different families, potentially incorporating culturally sensitive approaches where applicable. Additionally, raising

## References

awareness about the benefits of emotion regulation training among families could encourage more couples to seek out and participate in such programs, thereby promoting healthier family dynamics and improved resilience against life's challenges.

In conclusion, this study highlights the potential of emotion regulation training as an effective intervention for enhancing family resilience among couples. Despite its limitations, the findings offer valuable insights for both research and practice, underscoring the importance of emotion regulation in fostering resilient families capable of facing adversities together. Future research should continue to build on these findings, exploring innovative approaches to strengthen the emotional bonds and resilience of families across diverse contexts.

## Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

## Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

## Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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## Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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## Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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