

Comparison of the Effectiveness of Schema Therapy and Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT) in Increasing Marital Intimacy among Couples


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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence “One major body of research has explored early maladaptive schemas...” covers several concepts sequentially. This paragraph would benefit from explicit explanation of which specific schemas are most theoretically connected to changes in marital intimacy to strengthen conceptual alignment.

In the paragraph beginning with “Schema therapy (ST) has therefore become an important therapeutic approach...”, the narrative shifts quickly from personality disorders to couples therapy. A transitional sentence explaining why a modality designed for personality pathology is applicable to marital intimacy would improve conceptual coherence.

Similarly, the EFT intervention text beginning “The intervention began with introducing group members...” includes multiple therapeutic components without clear hierarchy. Consider reorganizing this content into concise, structured elements (cycle identification, primary emotions, bonding events, consolidation).

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence “Research within Iranian contexts has also documented the usefulness of schema-based interventions...” is too briefly covered given its relevance. Consider expanding on what aspects of intimacy were improved in those studies to better motivate the current research.

The EFT overview paragraph beginning with “Another prominent intervention for enhancing relational intimacy...” lists several therapeutic mechanisms but does not indicate which mechanisms may be most relevant for intimacy specifically. Strengthening this focus would improve theoretical justification.

The sentence “Given these effects, EFT is considered one of the most evidence-based...” reads conclusively. It would be beneficial to specify which dimensions of intimacy EFT most strongly influences (e.g., emotional accessibility, responsiveness) to align with study outcomes.

In the Methods, the sentence “The sample consisted of 60 eligible volunteer couples... Participants were then assigned to three groups of 20 individuals.” is unclear. It is not explicit whether each group includes 20 individuals or 20 couples. This must be corrected to avoid misinterpretation.

The sampling description “118 individuals... were purposively selected based on cutoff scores...” should acknowledge the potential sampling bias introduced by purposive screening, particularly since those with higher conflict scores may systematically differ from the larger population.

The schema therapy intervention description beginning with “Across the sessions, couples were first introduced to...” contains extensive detail in a single paragraph. For clarity, please divide this into thematic sub-sections (e.g., psychoeducation, mode work, rescripting, Healthy Adult skills).

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.