

Effectiveness of a Child Abuse Prevention Training Program on the Tendency Towards Child Abuse and Parental Self-Efficacy in Mothers with a History of Child Abuse

Mahmood. Moradi¹, Zahra. Yousefi^{2*}, Mansoureh. Bahramipour²

¹ PhD Student in Counseling, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch (Khorasgan), Isfahan, Iran

² Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch (Khorasgan), Isfahan, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: z.yousefi@khuif.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Moradi, M., Yousefi, Z., & Bahramipour, M. (2023). Effectiveness of a Child Abuse Prevention Training Program on the Tendency Towards Child Abuse and Parental Self-Efficacy in Mothers with a History of Child Abuse. *Psychology of Woman Journal*, 4(4), 124-133.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.61838/kman.pwj.4.4.15>



© 2023 the authors. Published by KMAN Publication Inc. (KMANPUB), Ontario, Canada. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a child abuse prevention training method on the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy in mothers with a history of committing child abuse in the city of Isfahan.

Methods and Materials: This applied research was of a quasi-experimental type, conducted with a pre-test, post-test, and a 2-month follow-up with a control group. The population in this study included all clients of the social emergency centers in Isfahan in the year 2023, from which 30 mothers with a history of child abuse interested in participating were selected using purposive sampling and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Participants from both groups completed the Child Abuse Tendency (CAT) and Parental Self-Efficacy (PSE) questionnaires at the pre-test, post-test, and two-month follow-up stages. The experimental group received eight 90-minute sessions of child abuse prevention training. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 and the repeated measures analysis of variance method.

Findings: The results of the repeated measures analysis of variance indicated that child abuse prevention training effectively reduces the tendency towards child abuse ($F=28.45$) and also increases the self-efficacy ($F=55.73$) of mothers with a history of child abuse ($P<0.05$).

Conclusion: Based on the results, it can be said that to reduce the tendency towards child abuse and improve the self-efficacy of mothers with a history of child abuse, the child abuse prevention training method can be used.

Keywords: Child abuse prevention training package, Child abuse, Parental self-efficacy.

1. Introduction

Childhood is one of the most important and effective periods of human development. During this

developmental stage, the individual's personality traits are established and formed (Aghaziarati & Nejatifar, 2023). Research in the field of behavioral and social disorders in adolescents has shown that the lack of attention, affection,

and educational care from parents in the early years of a child's life leads to the child's maladjustment with the environment (Sukhodolsky et al., 2016). One of the significant issues that disrupt the normal development of children is child abuse (Chen & Chan, 2016; Griffith, 2022). There is strong evidence that abuse in childhood has long-term mental health outcomes, and these adverse childhood experiences lead to a serious public health crisis for children (Parker & Nemeroff, 2021). Medically, socially, and legally, child abuse is defined as a type of behavior by parents or child caregivers that endangers or harms the child's welfare, mental, and physical health. Globally, 1 in 4 children has been the victim of physical violence, with 23% of these children subjected to physical violence, including shaking and beating. 18% of sexual abuse victims are girls, and 8% are boys, with 9 out of every 10 girls forced into sexual relations being abused by close family members, relatives, and friends (Habibi et al., 2014). In Iran, more than 10% of children attending specialized emergency clinics have suffered physical harm, with parents being the cause of these injuries. Overall, physical abuse accounts for 17%, emotional abuse for 49%, and neglect for 36% of cases in Iran (Mahboob et al., 2021; Moradi, 2022). Child abuse is more prevalent in younger children, and these maltreatments are usually committed by caregivers (parents, childcare workers, caregivers at care centers, relatives), with about 78% of all abuses being perpetrated by the parents themselves (Eskandari et al., 2016; Shamaeizadeh, 2018)

The most important factors associated with child abuse include three major groups: child-related factors such as physical and mental problems of the child, parent-related factors such as mental and personality disorders of the parents, and society-related factors such as legislative ambiguities (Moradi, 2022). Each type of mistreatment has its own health and psychological consequences. In cases of neglect, often the physical, mental, or emotional state of the child is disturbed. In severe forms of neglect, there is a failure to thrive (Toth & Manly, 2019). Many child abusers have been victims of abuse and mistreatment in their childhood and continue to abuse other children in adulthood, which is one of the worst consequences of child abuse that perpetuates it (Lippard & Nemeroff, 2020). Most child abusers are parents. Parents' attitudes towards their children and their behaviors towards them are one of the important causes of such behavior (Bahadori Khosro Shahi, 2017). Many cases of child abuse result from parents' ignorance about how to interact properly with their children and the consequences of this phenomenon. It should be noted that in

some cases, parents have incorrect beliefs and attitudes that justify abusive behaviors (Asadollahi et al., 2016).

Parents who do not have appropriate parental self-efficacy feel incompetent in their relationship with their child and face difficulties in raising their child (Saadati, 2020). Parental self-efficacy refers to parents' perception of their effectiveness in the realm of parenting, i.e., how they use positive parenting strategies and the extent of their resilience and strictness in child-rearing, which encompasses a wide range of outcomes in the social, emotional, and behavioral life of the child, one of these outcomes being strict and obsessive upbringing leading to child abuse (Moradi, 2022). Parental self-efficacy also applies to parents' assessment of their ability to successfully fulfill their role as parents. Parents' sense of self-efficacy has a significant impact on parent-child interactions and the quality of parenting, such that parents with higher self-efficacy are more inclined to use positive parenting methods like being responsive, sensitive, warm, stimulating, employing efficient adaptation styles, and caring without punishment (Shokoohi-Yekta & Shahabi, 2018). Parents who choose inappropriate punitive methods in response to their child's misbehavior and those who are unaware of their psychological characteristics or suffer from mental and even physical problems and are indifferent to them, and generally lack child-rearing skills, whether intentionally or unintentionally, commit violence and abuse against their children (Ghorbani & Jomenia, 2018).

To date, various behavioral, cognitive, confrontational, and legal strategies, as well as separation, along with educating parents on parenting methods, life skills training, legal recognition, and support for at-risk children and adolescents, and redefining the psychological harms of children and adolescents, have been used by specialists in medical and social emergency centers as well as counseling and social work centers to address the problem of child abuse (Mohammadi, 2019). One of the methods used to combat child abuse is Seligman's parenting style. This method employs cognitive and behavioral skills to increase parents' knowledge in employing various parenting methods. The cause of child abuse by parents in this method is the lack of necessary skills in child-rearing (Moradi, 2022).

Other methods include preventive measures before the occurrence of violence against children. This includes research on the causes of child abuse, identifying and treating individuals prone to child abuse, and national-level actions such as public awareness about the effects and complications of this phenomenon on various groups in

society (Lavanya & Ahmed, 2019). Various studies have been conducted on the relationship between child abuse and parental self-efficacy. For instance, Saadati, Yousefi, and Golparvar (2019) concluded that parents who received an 8-session parenting program in the STEP method had better parent-child relationships, higher parental self-efficacy, and greater cognitive flexibility (Saadati, 2020). Azimifar, Jazayeri, Fatehizade, et al. (2018) found parenting training based on acceptance and commitment to be more effective than parent management training on the parental self-efficacy of mothers with children with behavioral disorders (Azimifar et al., 2018). Daneshmand Kkhorasgani and Yousefi (2018) found that correcting maladaptive schemas in mothers with children with behavioral problems was effective in improving these disorders (Daneshmand Khorasgani, 2018). Rudolph, Zimsjambek, Shanley, et al. (2018) proved the effectiveness of positive parenting training in correcting mothers' incorrect attitudes towards mistreating their children and increasing authoritative discipline (Rudolph & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018; Rudolph et al., 2018). Zolrahim (2020) found cognitive-behavioral training for abusive parents significantly effective in reducing parents' tendency towards child abuse (Zenalipur et al., 2009). Habibi, Amou-Pour, and Fallah (2018) identified parental awareness as an effective factor in reducing child abuse among them (Habibi et al., 2014). Griffith (2022) concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a decline in performance and parental burnout, was implicated in their commitment to mistreating their children (Griffith, 2022). Camilo, Garido, Calheiros (2022) considered incompatible parenting methods and cognitive factors such as beliefs related to parenting among the precursors of child abuse (Camilo et al., 2022). Yang et al. (2019) highlighted the role of training positive parent-child interactions in both reducing the incidence of child abuse and preventing its subsequent consequences (Yang et al., 2019). Albanese, Russo, and Geller (2019) deemed parental self-efficacy effective in parent-child relationships as well as the psychological well-being of children (Albanese et al., 2019). Chen and Chan (2016) found parenting education and controlling factors related to child abuse effective in reducing parents' commitment to violence against their children but ineffective in reducing parental stress (Chen & Chan, 2016).

Research backgrounds have shown that educational programs in the field of combating child abuse have been limited, and so far, the effectiveness of a native educational package for combating child abuse in reducing the tendency

towards child abuse and improving parental self-efficacy has not been researched. On the other hand, the importance of education in raising family awareness of the negative effects of this phenomenon and consequently reducing child abuse highlights the necessity of research in this area. Therefore, there is a need for designing programs in the field of prevention and combating child abuse and evaluating them so that after confirming the effectiveness of these programs, they can be used practically and on a large scale for the prevention of child abuse. It is worth noting that despite numerous research in the field of child abuse, a structured program to combat this social harm has not been designed, although various educations focusing on different segments of society and even parents are visible. In general, the necessity of this research can be summarized as follows: the absence of a parenting package specially for abusive mothers, the absence of a parenting package that addresses the causes of child abuse. Also, the results of this research can help in developing educational packages to combat child abuse, the results of such research can assist in developing educational packages to correct parenting methods, the results of such research can smooth the path for other research in this area, the results of this research can enrich the knowledge of parents in the field of parenting, and finally, the results of this research will be effective in developing frameworks for preventing violence against children. The educational package for combating child abuse used in this research is derived from Moradi, Yousefi, and Bahrami Pour (2023), which has previously been researched for its effectiveness on parental stress and behavioral disorders in children in mothers with a history of child abuse (Moradi, 2022). The present research aimed to answer the question of how effective the educational package for combating child abuse is on the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy in mothers with a history of child abuse in the city of Isfahan.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study was a quasi-experimental type with experimental and control groups, and evaluations were conducted in the form of pre-test, post-test, and a 2-month follow-up. The statistical population included all individuals who visited the social emergency center in Isfahan in 2023, who were invited to the centers due to domestic violence and social harms. After obtaining the necessary permissions from the welfare organization, in accordance with the

methodological experts' opinion of the research, and similar studies, initially, 30 mothers with a history of child abuse were selected through purposive sampling from these visitors and then randomly assigned into two groups of 15. The criterion for having a history of child abuse was based on reports from health care centers, judiciary, and social harm centers of the welfare organization due to any type of abuse committed by these mothers against their children. The inclusion criteria for these mothers in the research were having literacy (at least primary education), all the mothers under study were over 30 years old and were living with their spouses at the time of the study, had no previous marriage history, and had at least 5 years of marital life. The age range of the children of these mothers was up to 12 years. The absence of a history of hospitalization due to psychiatric disorders, the family not being in job and economic and marital crisis, not participating in other educational courses simultaneously, and the mothers not suffering from chronic physical diseases and addiction were among the other inclusion criteria. The exclusion criteria were unwillingness to participate in the sessions, aggression, insult or deviation from the main topic, and non-cooperation in performing tasks.

After sampling and assigning mothers with a history of child abuse to experimental and control groups, the experimental group mothers were given a child abuse prevention training package according to Table No. 1 for 8 sessions of 90 minutes each in person. Both groups completed the research instruments in the form of pre-test, post-test, and 2-month follow-up. To adhere to research ethics, subjects were given the option to withdraw from the training course at any time if they wished. They were also assured that their information would remain confidential and be used only for research purposes. Furthermore, mothers in the control group received the training in a condensed form after the course ended.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Child Abuse

This questionnaire was developed and validated in 2017. It is a 19-item scale with four subscales for sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect. The respondent answers the questions on a 5-point scale from "very much" to "very little," and the responses are scored from 1 to 5. In this questionnaire, the minimum score is 19 and the maximum is 95. A higher score on this questionnaire indicates a greater tendency towards child abuse, and a lower score indicates a

lesser tendency. The content validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by psychology experts. Also, construct validity was examined through exploratory and confirmatory factors and was validated. The internal consistency reliability of this scale was tested, and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 was obtained (Shamaeizadeh, 2018). In this study, the reliability of this instrument using Cronbach's alpha was 0.92.

2.2.2. Parenting Self-Efficacy

This tool was created by Dumka, Stoerzinger, Jackson, et al. (1996) to assess parental self-efficacy, comprising 10 questions that include five positive and five negative statements, evaluating parents' confidence in their ability to perform their parental roles. The scoring of this instrument uses a Likert scale from 1 (rarely) to 7 (always), with the minimum and maximum scores being 10 and 70, respectively. A higher score on this questionnaire indicates more desirable self-efficacy. The internal consistency of this scale for English-speaking mothers with a medium economic level had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70. The reliability coefficient for this instrument in Iran, using Cronbach's alpha method, was 0.76. It's worth mentioning that the content validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by three psychology professors (Saadati, 2020). In this study, the reliability of this tool through Cronbach's alpha was 0.814.

2.3. Intervention

2.3.1. Child Abuse Prevention Package

The child abuse prevention package for mothers with a history of child abuse is developed by the researchers (Moradi, 2022), with the aim of the package being to explore the causes of tendency towards child abuse among mothers from the perspective of social emergency experts and to prepare an educational package to combat child abuse. For this purpose, after interviewing the aforementioned experts and analyzing qualitative data, the initial theoretical constructs derived from the experts' opinions were prepared, then the theme network was presented, and the desired educational package was developed using thematic analysis. The research environment was the social emergency specialists in the city of Isfahan, who had rich experiences in working with individuals committing child abuse. These experts were purposefully selected from among experienced experts. The criterion for the number of participants was

based on the principle of saturation, which occurred after 19 interviews, however, for greater accuracy and to achieve more stable results, it was increased to 28 participants. Thematic analysis revealed three high or overarching categories, which were child-centered, family-centered, and society-centered. Also, to examine content validity, seven social emergency experts were asked to review the content on a five-point scale based on content evaluation questions. Then, the content validity was examined using the CVR coefficient, and a CVR of 0.90 was obtained, indicating the content validity of this package.

Session 1: Understanding Child Abuse and Sharing Experiences

In the first session, participants engage in discussions about their problems with their children and their parenting methods. This session aims to familiarize participants with the definition of child abuse, setting the foundation for understanding the significance of the training. By sharing experiences, participants start to build a supportive community where they can learn from each other's challenges and successes.

Session 2: Types and Causes of Child Abuse

The second session introduces participants to the various types of child abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect. Participants also explore the causes of child abuse, understanding the factors that may lead to abusive behaviors. This knowledge is crucial for recognizing the breadth of actions that constitute child abuse and the underlying issues that need to be addressed.

Session 3: Perpetrators and Consequences of Child Abuse

In this session, participants learn about the perpetrators of child abuse and the consequences that abuse has on children. By understanding who can be abusers and how abuse affects children's development, mental health, and well-being, mothers can grasp the seriousness of their actions and the long-term impact on their children.

Session 4: Child Development and Parenting Styles

This session focuses on child development stages, crises, and related problems, along with various parenting styles based on control and affection indices. Participants are introduced to authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved parenting, understanding the effects of each style on children's development and how they can adopt more effective strategies.

Session 5: Characteristics of Effective Parenting

Participants become acquainted with the characteristics of effective parenting that positively influence child upbringing. This session aims to highlight the traits and

behaviors that lead to healthy child development, emphasizing the importance of positive interaction, communication, and support.

Session 6: Emotional Regulation and Cognitive Correction Techniques

The sixth session introduces ways to regulate emotions and cognitive correction techniques that play a significant role in reducing child abuse. Mothers learn strategies to manage their feelings and thoughts, preventing abusive reactions and promoting healthier ways to address parenting challenges.

Session 7: Forming Secure Attachments

This session is dedicated to understanding how secure attachments form between parents and children, focusing on reducing marital conflicts and improving parenting behaviors. Secure attachments are crucial for children's emotional development and confidence, and this session offers strategies to strengthen the parent-child bond.

Session 8: Lifestyle Management and the Role of Punishment and Reinforcement

In the final session, mothers learn about managing their lifestyle to prevent child abuse and the role of correct punishment and reinforcement in preventing child abuse and enhancing socialization. This session emphasizes the importance of creating a nurturing environment, setting appropriate boundaries, and using positive reinforcement to encourage desired behaviors.

2.4. Data Analysis

After implementing the child abuse prevention training, the data obtained from the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up stages of the experimental and control groups were analyzed using SPSS software at the descriptive level (mean and standard deviation) and at the inferential level (repeated measures analysis of variance) to test the research hypotheses.

3. Findings and Results

The demographic information analysis showed an average age of 34.5 years and an average marriage duration of 11.9 years for mothers in the experimental group, and an average age of 35.2 years and a marriage duration of 11.2 years for mothers in the control group. Additionally, the frequency percentage of the educational levels of the subjects in the experimental group was 47% for primary, 40% for middle school, and 13% for high school, while in the control group, it was 53% for primary, 34% for middle

school, and 13% for high school. Descriptive findings related to the research are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Indices of Mean Scores and Standard Deviation by Group Membership and Evaluation Stage

Variable	N	Evaluation Stage	Experimental Group Mean (SD)	Control Group Mean (SD)
General Tendency Towards Child Abuse	15	Pre-test	71.06 (6.5)	70.93 (5.5)
		Post-test	40.93 (12.8)	68.86 (4.5)
		Follow-up	39.86 (12.2)	64.60 (4.2)
Tendency Towards Emotional Child Abuse	15	Pre-test	37.60 (3.8)	37.00 (3.6)
		Post-test	20.86 (7.2)	35.66 (4.3)
		Follow-up	19.93 (6.7)	33.66 (3.1)
Tendency Towards Physical Child Abuse	15	Pre-test	16.66 (2.8)	16.66 (2.6)
		Post-test	10.36 (3.6)	16.26 (2.3)
		Follow-up	10.33 (3.2)	15.73 (2.65)
Tendency Towards Sexual Child Abuse	15	Pre-test	4.46 (1.8)	4.73 (1.66)
		Post-test	3.20 (1.3)	4.73 (1.66)
		Follow-up	3.20 (1.3)	4.52 (1.45)
Tendency Towards Neglectful Child Abuse	15	Pre-test	13.52 (1.9)	12.53 (1.7)
		Post-test	6.60 (2.4)	12.30 (1.6)
		Follow-up	4.40 (2.5)	11.26 (1.5)
Parental Self-Efficacy	15	Pre-test	25.80 (7.9)	23.66 (5.1)
		Post-test	47.40 (7.1)	22.22 (3.2)
		Follow-up	48.00 (5.0)	22.80 (2.5)

Before presenting the results of the repeated measures ANOVA, assumptions for parametric tests were evaluated. Accordingly, the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the assumption of normal distribution of data samples in the variables of tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy in both experimental and control groups during pre-test, post-test, and follow-up stages was met. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was also tested with Levene's test, showing no significant difference in variances between the two groups, thus meeting the assumption of variance equality. Furthermore, the assumption of homogeneity of variances in both variables of tendency

towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy was met. According to the t-test results, there was no significant difference in pre-test scores between the experimental and control groups in the dependent variables (tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy). According to the sphericity assumption, the variance of the dependent variable values among groups should be equal at each level of the factor or groups. In this study, Mauchly's test results indicated that the data's sphericity assumption in the variables of tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy was met.

Table 2

Results of Repeated Measures ANOVA for Tendency Towards Child Abuse and Parental Self-Efficacy by Group

Variable	Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	p	Effect Size	Test Power
Tendency Towards Child Abuse	Factor 1 (Time)	1	914.54	914.54	216.24	< .001	.83	1.00
	Factor 1 * Group	2	24.66	12.28	28.45	< .001	.57	1.00
	Group	2	7072.17	2536.08	26.52	< .001	.55	1.00
	Error	42	1775.33	42.27				
Parental Self-Efficacy	Factor 1 (Time)	1	2992.90	2992.90	164.41	< .001	.79	1.00
	Factor 1 * Group	2	2029.06	1014.53	55.73	< .001	.73	1.00
	Group	2	6900.32	3450.16	54.04	< .001	.73	1.00
	Error	42	764.53	18.20				

Table 2 presents the results of the repeated measures ANOVA. Based on the calculated F ratios, the time factor or assessment stage had a significant effect on scores of

tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy ($p < .01$). The effect size indicates that the time factor explains 83% of the variance in scores for the tendency towards child

abuse and 79% of the variance in scores for parental self-efficacy. Moreover, according to the calculated F ratio, the group membership effect (child abuse prevention training) on both scores of the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy is significant ($p < .01$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the group membership factor or received treatment type also significantly affected the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy. The effect size shows that group membership (child abuse prevention training) explains 57% and 72% of the variance in scores for the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy, respectively. Finally, the results indicate that

the interaction effect of treatment type and time factor on scores for the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy among subjects is significant ($p < .01$), meaning the received treatment type at different evaluation stages also significantly affected the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy of mothers with a history of child abuse by 55% and 72%, respectively. The statistical power also indicates high statistical accuracy and sample size adequacy. Table 3 shows the pairwise comparison of mean scores for the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy among subjects based on the evaluation stage.

Table 3

Pairwise Comparison of Mean Scores for Tendency Towards Child Abuse and Parental Self-Efficacy Among Subjects by Evaluation Stage

Variable	Baseline Stage (Mean)	Comparison Stage (Mean)	Mean Difference	Significance
Tendency Towards Child Abuse	Pre-test: 71.06	Post-test: 40.93	-30.13	.00
		Follow-up: 39.86	-31.20	.00
Parental Self-Efficacy	Pre-test: 25.80	Post-test: 47.40	+21.60	.00
		Follow-up: 48.00	+22.20	.00

As Table 3 shows, in the experimental group, there is a significant difference in mean scores between pre-test, post-test, and follow-up stages for both variables of tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy. This means that child abuse prevention training significantly changed the post-test and follow-up scores for the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy of mothers with a history of child abuse compared to the pre-test stage. It's worth noting that while the child abuse prevention training maintained its effect in the follow-up stage compared to the pre-test, it did not show a significant difference compared to the post-test. Meanwhile, in the control group, there was no significant difference in mean scores between the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up stages for both variables of tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy.

In summary, it can be said that the child abuse prevention training significantly changed the mean scores for the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy of mothers with a history of child abuse in the post-test stage, and this effect was maintained in the follow-up stage.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the current research was to examine the effectiveness of a child abuse prevention training package on the tendency towards child abuse and parental self-efficacy in mothers with a history of child abuse. As discussed above, the results indicate that child abuse prevention training

reduces the tendency towards child abuse among these mothers. This finding is consistent with the prior research (Rudolph & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018; Rudolph et al., 2018; Zolrahim & Azmoudeh, 2020). To explain how child abuse prevention training decreases the tendency towards child abuse in mothers with a history of child abuse, it can be said that first, most child abusers are parents. Second, parents' attitudes towards their children and their behaviors towards them are one of the main causes of violence against children. Also, many instances of child abuse stem from parents', especially mothers', insufficient knowledge about how to properly interact with their children and the consequences of this phenomenon. It is worth mentioning that in some cases, parents hold incorrect beliefs and attitudes that legitimize abusive behaviors (Asadollahi et al., 2016). Therefore, since a significant portion of abuse against children is perpetrated by their mothers, to control the level of violence against children, parents must be directly educated about the precursors and consequences of child abuse to prevent this problem. In addition, parents' skills should be enhanced, undesirable parenting methods should be prevented, and parental self-efficacy in mothers should be increased. Thus, child abuse prevention training enabled mothers to recognize their inappropriate behavioral methods in parenting, eliminate their ineffective educational strategies, and improve their interactions with their child. During the training, mothers became familiar with various effective and

ineffective ways of mothering and their consequences on child behavior. They learned how to deal with their children's communication or behavioral deficits or failures in their tasks. Moreover, mothers learned to use milder methods like timed deprivation instead of physical punishment and encourage their children to identify and pursue their talents and interests.

Other findings of this study showed that child abuse prevention training was effective in increasing the level of parental self-efficacy in mothers with a history of child abuse. This finding aligns with the findings of the prior studies (Azimifar et al., 2018; Saadati, 2020; Shamaeizadeh, 2018). To explain how child abuse prevention training improves parental self-efficacy in mothers with a history of child abuse, it can be said that mothers who believe in their capabilities and skills in the parental role experience a higher sense of parental self-efficacy (Eskandari et al., 2016). Additionally, the sense of self-efficacy in mothers significantly affects the type of interaction with their children and the quality of parenting, such that mothers with better self-efficacy are more inclined to use positive parenting methods like being responsive, sensitive, warmth, stimulation, using efficient adaptation styles, and caring without punishment (Shokoohi-Yekta & Shahabi, 2018). These mothers, while undergoing child abuse prevention training, became familiar with children's developmental stages and their various characteristics, as well as the developmental crises of children and the characteristics of mothers committing violence against their children. They managed to strengthen their belief in their capabilities and skills in the parental role by understanding these characteristics, appropriately deal with their children's behaviors, and ultimately have a greater sense of self-efficacy. Moreover, mothers learned during the training that the interaction between mother and child significantly impacts the child's behavior. They became acquainted with various parenting styles and learned how to act authoritatively and help their children take responsibility for their actions. They also learned how to improve their interaction with their child by modifying their parenting style and changing their ineffective beliefs about children's misbehavior, which is a reaction to mothers' ineffective behaviors, thus feeling a higher sense of competence and self-efficacy. Modeling the parenting style while reducing harsh behavior towards the child increased parental self-efficacy in mothers with a history of child abuse and made them more satisfied with their maternal role.

5. Limitations and Suggestions

The present research was limited to mothers with a history of child abuse, so caution should be exercised in generalizing its results to the male population. Also, this study was conducted in Isfahan, and caution should be exercised in applying its results to other communities.

The issue of child abuse and its effects on children's development is of great importance, so it is suggested that education related to combating child abuse and parenting, especially alongside other educations both in treatment centers and kindergartens, be considered and, if possible, both fathers and mothers be encouraged to such educations. It is also suggested that booklets on parenting methods for combating child abuse be prepared and made available to parents. It is recommended that parent-teacher meetings in educational centers be conducted with the presence of specialists and counselors to improve the scientific level of parents and teachers regarding ways to deal with children and familiarity with problems and mistreatment of children, considering the education provided in this research. Another point is that part of the families', especially mothers', tendency towards child abuse stems from legal ambiguities and managerial weaknesses in this area, so it is recommended that while holding meetings or specialized working groups in this area, lawmakers be made aware of the impact of these ambiguities on the quality of interaction with children. Finally, considering that part of the tendency towards child abuse results from incorrect beliefs or culture, it is suggested that meetings be held with the managers of welfare organizations and health networks to arrange for the preparation of radio and television programs in this area to conduct public awareness.

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.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to all individuals helped us to do the project.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

References

- Aghaziarati, A., & Nejatifar, S. (2023). Emotional Development and Regulation in Children: A Review of Recent Advances. *KMAN Counseling & Psychology Nexus*, 1(1), 118-125. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.psychnexus.1.1.13>
- Albanese, A. M., Russo, G. R., & Geller, P. A. (2019). The role of parental self-efficacy in parent and child well-being: A systematic review of associated outcomes. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 45(3), 333-363. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12661>
- Asadollahi, M., Jabraeili, M., Asghari Jafarabadi, M., & Hallaj, M. (2016). Parents' attitude toward child abuse conducted in the health centers of Tabriz. *International Journal of School Health*, 3(3), 1-6. https://intjsh.sums.ac.ir/article_45088.html
- Azimifar, S., Jazayeri, R. s., Fatehizade, M. s., & Abedi, A. (2018). The comparing the effects of parent management training and acceptance and commitment based parenting training on mother-child relationship among mothers who have children with externalizing behavior problems. *Family Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 7(2), 99-122. <https://doi.org/10.22034/fcp.2018.57613>
- Bahadori Khosro Shahi, J. (2017). Communication Parental Self-Efficacy and Self Forgiveness with Mother-Child Interaction in Mothers of Children with Mental Retardation. *Empowering Exceptional Children*, 8(2), 26-36. https://www.ceciranj.ir/article_63557_184c617ae07488d60c57c1e924260637.pdf
- Camilo, C., Garrido, M. V., & Calheiros, M. M. (2022). Parental attitudes in child maltreatment. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 37(5-6), 2920-2947. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0886260520943724>
- Chen, M., & Chan, K. L. (2016). Effects of parenting programs on child maltreatment prevention: A meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 17(1), 88-104. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1524838014566718>
- Daneshmand Khorasgani, M., & Yousefi, Z. (2018). The Effectiveness of Group Training of the Reforming Parenting Styles Based on Mothers, Maladjustment Schemas on Improving Behavioral Problems among Preschool Children in Isfahan City. *Knowledge & Research in Applied Psychology*, 4(18), 62-71. <http://sanad.iau.ir/fa/Article/892793>
- Eskandari, B., Pouretamad, H., Habibi, M., Mazaheri, M. A., & Faridar, A. (2016). EFFECT OF SENSORY PROCESSING STYLES INTERVENTION STRATEGIES ON REDUCING SYMPTOMS IN AUTISTIC CHILDREN. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341494393_EFFECT_OF_SENSORY_PROCESSING_STYLES_INTERVENTION_STRATEGIES_ON_REDUCING_SYMPTOMS_IN_AUTISTIC_CHILDREN
- Ghorbani, A., & Jomenia, S. J. (2018). The Role of Social Factors (Family, School, Peer Group) in Socialization of Students in Golestan Province. *Journal of Applied Sociology*, 29(2), 113-128. <https://doi.org/10.22108/jas.2018.100602.1013>
- Griffith, A. K. (2022). Parental Burnout and Child Maltreatment During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of family violence*, 37(5), 725-731. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-020-00172-2>
- Habibi, S., Moghadam, M., Fallah, M., & Amoopour, M. (2014). The effects of instruction on the degree of bad effects of child abuse on properties of children's personality to parents by using electronic educational software method. *Advances in Environmental Biology*, 8, 533-538. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288682099_The_effects_of_instruction_on_the_degree_of_bad_effects_of_child_abuse_on_properties_of_children's_personality_to_parents_by_using_electronic_educational_software_method
- Lavanya, L., & Ahmed, N. (2019). Antecedents and Consequences of Child Abuse. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 12(47), 1-9. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Latha-Lavanya/publication/338542172_Antecedents_and_Consequences_of_Child_Abuse/links/60f0ef2efb568a7098b2036f/Antecedents-and-Consequences-of-Child-Abuse.pdf
- Lippard, E. T. C., & Nemeroff, C. B. (2020). The Devastating Clinical Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect: Increased Disease Vulnerability and Poor Treatment Response in Mood Disorders. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 177(1), 20-36. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2019.19010020>
- Mahboob, M., Basharpour, S., Hajilou, N., Anbari, E., & Salvat, H. (2021). Causal Modeling of Bullying-related Behaviors based on the Experience of Child Abuse the Mediating Role of Emotional Safety. *arumsj*, 21(4), 402-415. <https://doi.org/10.52547/jarums.21.4.402>
- Mohammadi, a. (2019). Study the Role of Individual - Inner Factors in Family Violence. *Islamic Law*, 15(59), 57-85. https://hoquq.iict.ac.ir/article_35185_ed87d18a6555f70bd9f075883145f5d7.pdf
- Moradi, M., Yousefi, Z., & Bahramipour, M. (2022). The effectiveness of Seligman parenting training on child abuse tendencies and parenting self-efficacy in mothers with a history of child abuse. *Scientific Journal of Social Psychology*, 63(10), 17-31. <http://sanad.iau.ir/fa/Article/925393>
- Parker, J., & Nemeroff, C. B. (2021). Chapter 6 - The Long-Term Biological and Clinical Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect. In G. Fink (Ed.), *Stress: Genetics, Epigenetics and Genomics* (pp. 57-82). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-813156-5.00006-6>

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethical Considerations

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

- Rudolph, J., & Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J. (2018). Parents as protectors: A qualitative study of parents' views on child sexual abuse prevention. *Child abuse & neglect*, 85, 28-38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.08.016>
- Rudolph, J., Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J., Shanley, D. C., & Hawkins, R. (2018). Child sexual abuse prevention opportunities: Parenting, programs, and the reduction of risk. *Child maltreatment*, 23(1), 96-106. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1077559517729479>
- Saadati, N., Yousefi, Z., & Gholparvar, M. . (2020). The Effectiveness of a Native Educational Counseling Package on the Quality of Parent-Child Relationships and Parenting Self-Efficacy. *Journal of Excellence in counseling and psychotherapy*, 9(34), 46-56. <https://www.magiran.com/paper/2178309>
- Shamaeizadeh, N., & Yousefi, Z. (2018). Multiple Relations between Personality Factors and History of Child abuse with Family Communications in Isfahan. *Knowledge & Research in Applied Psychology*, 3(19), 121-113. <https://doi.org/10.30486/jsrp.2018.544566>
- Shokoohi-Yekta, M., & Shahabi, R. (2018). Effects of the raising a thinking child workshop on children behavioral problems and parenting self-efficacy [Research]. *Journal of Psychological Science*, 17(68), 419-426. <http://psychologicalscience.ir/article-1-177-en.html>
- Sukhodolsky, D. G., Smith, S. D., McCauley, S. A., Ibrahim, K., & Piasecka, J. B. (2016). Behavioral Interventions for Anger, Irritability, and Aggression in Children and Adolescents. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, 26(1), 58-64. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cap.2015.0120>
- Toth, S. L., & Manly, J. T. (2019). Developmental Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect: Implications for Intervention. *Child Development Perspectives*, 13(1), 59-64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12317>
- Yang, C., Liu, X., Yang, Y., Huang, X., Song, Q., Wang, Y., & Zhou, H. (2019). Quality of care and suspected developmental delay among children aged 1–59 months: a cross-sectional study in 8 counties of rural China. *BMC pediatrics*, 19(1), 41. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12887-019-1406-x>
- Zenalipur, H., Zarei, A., & Zandiniya, Z. (2009). General and academic self-efficacy of students and its relationship with academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology Studies*, 6(9), 13-28. <https://doi.org/10.22111/jeps.2009.737>
- Zolrahim, R., & Azmoudeh, M. (2020). The Effect of Cognitive-Behavioral Play Therapy on Social Anxiety and Aggressive Behaviors in Primary School Children [Research]. *Quarterly Journal of Child Mental Health*, 6(4), 231-240. <https://doi.org/10.29252/jcmh.6.4.21>