

Expressive Writing Therapy in Allaying the Mental Health Condition of Abused Adolescence

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ABSTRACT

Background: Expressive Writing Therapy helps the adolescence in overcoming their unsaid emotions on abuse, which in turn will help them to allay their mental health condition. **Aim & Objectives:** The major aim of the study is to improve the mental health condition of the abused adolescent with the help of Expressive Writing Therapy. **Materials & Method:** This is a Quasi- Experimental study and follows One – group Pre-test and Post- test method; Purposive sampling method is opted for the study. **Samples:** 10 individuals were selected on the basic criteria of adolescent who is trying to overcome their abuse incident. **Intervention:** Expressive Writing Therapy is implemented to see the improvement in the Mental Health Condition of Abused Adolescent. **Outcome:** The adolescence experienced a relief from the traumatic incident and has shown evident improvement in their mental health condition.

Keywords: *Expressive Writing Therapy, Abused Adolescent, Mental Health Condition.*

Expressive Writing Therapy:

It has its origin from 1980's wherein John Pennebaker initiated this writing therapy as an intervention strategy to the individuals who are coping with their traumatic events. It is considered to be one of the positive intervention strategies. Expressive Writing Therapy is also called as "Emotional Writing" in which the individuals are not controlled by any limitations or criteria to be followed while writing. There is no necessary to follow particular form or structure in writing by giving perfect vocabulary, grammar and punctuations. There are several types of expressive writing therapy few of which are writing a personal journal; writing letters; essays; poems; etc. Expressive Writing Therapy majorly focuses on the emotions of the individual rather than that specific event or the people involved in.

Mental Health Condition:

As defined by World Health Organization, the term Mental Health can be defined as the state of well- being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. It is evident that childhood abuse, trauma, isolation,

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loneliness and much more is listing on the top as they are the underlying factors in creating mental illness. Focusing on the abuse or traumatic experiences that a person is going through can be depressing for long periods of time, and this is the root cause of some mental health problems. It is evident that there the abused adolescence discloses the aggression; frustration and so on.

Abused Adolescence:

Abuse is not only in terms of sexual it may be of physical; emotional and in verbal forms too. 28% of the abuse cases are reported by Adolescence. Abused Adolescence may experience multiple issues not only on the basis of Physical and Mental health but also on the emotional aspects, poor academic performance. On a serious note, it may even lead to suicidal ideation; substance abuse. The impact on mental health of the abused adolescence by a parental figure is higher as compared to the adolescence that has faced traumatic experience of abuse by a stranger (Syeda, 2014).

Research Problem

The statement of the research problem is to assess the Expressive Writing Therapy in Allaying the Mental Health Condition of Abused Adults.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Meston et.al., (2013) found that Expressive writing may improve depressive and PTSD symptoms in women with CSA histories. Sexual schema-focused expressive writing in particular appears to improve sexual problems, especially for depressed women with CSA histories. Both treatments are accessible, cost-effective, and acceptable to patients.

Baike et.al., found that though no significant benefits in physical and psychological health were found, improvements in psychological wellbeing were associated with certain writing styles and expressive writing was deemed acceptable by high-risk drug dependent patients.

Pennebaker et.al., (2010) found the effect of Expressive Writing Therapy and The Ability to Express Emotions on Improving Control of Hallucinations of Mental Disorder Patients. Expressive Writing Therapy can enhance emotional disclosure and provide deep emotional and may facilitate the reduction of anxiety.

Harrington et.al., (2018) stated Expressive writing is efficacious to improve women's post-traumatic recovery and reduce symptoms of their post-traumatic stress disorder to some extent.

Rusdi et.al., (2022) stated that Expressive Writing Therapy is significant in controlling the hallucinations of mental disorder patients and improves the emotional disclosure ability.

Research Gap

The following are the identified Research Gaps,

- This study focuses on the umbrella term the mental health condition.
- This study focusses on the Expressive Writing Therapy as an intervention strategy in overcoming the abused incident.

Objectives

The primary objective of the study is to improve the mental health condition of the abused adults with the help of expressive writing therapy. Following are the secondary objectives,

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- To investigate the effect of Expressive Writing Therapy on Mental Health
- To evaluate the relationship between the pre - test and post- test.
- Analyzing the apparent difference between the Mental Health in the context of demographic variables.

Hypotheses

The following are the major hypothesis framed for the present study,

- There is a significant influence of Expressive Writing Therapy on Mental Health
- There is a significant relationship between pre- test and post- test.
- There is a significant difference between the Mental Health of abused adults in the context of demographic variables.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The most suitable research design for the present study is “Quasi- experimental” wherein One Group Pre- test Post- test method is implied.

Sampling Technique

As the study majorly focuses on the abused adolescence’s mental health, the appropriate sampling technique implied for the study is “Purposive Sampling Technique”.

Sample Size

Among 30 samples the study included 10 samples as the remaining samples didn’t meet up the inclusion criteria of the study.

Sample Group

Sample Group of the study exclusively contained the participants who were trying to overcome their traumatic experience from the abused incident.

SAMPLING FRAMEWORK

Phase I (Pre- test)	Phase II (Intervention)	Phase III (Post –test)
The participant was explained about the study and Informed Consent is obtained. The participant is asked to recall the traumatic (abused) incident and was asked to fill the Questionnaire in regard.	The individuals are now supposed to write about the feeling that they have been with-holding in regards to the abused incident in an A4 paper. There is no time limit to write.	Once they are done, the participants are asked to fill the Questionnaire

Intervention

Expressive Writing Therapy – One form of therapeutic intervention strategy that has its origin from 1980’s and been widely used for many mental health issues.

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Variables

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Demographic Variable
Mental Health	Expressive Writing Therapy	Type of Abuse (Physical, Sexual, Verbal & Emotional)
		Number of Attempts to Overcome (1, 2, 3, more than 3)
		Duration of the suppressed emotion (1, 2, 3, more than 3 years)
		Perpetrator (Family Member / Stranger)

Description of the Tool

To assess the Mental Health, General Health Questionnaire is used, which contains 12 items given by Golberg.

Inclusion Criteria

The following are the considered inclusion criteria in this study,

- The individual who are trying to overcome the abused incident were included to this study.
- The individuals who are comfortable in writing about their feelings were included.
- The adolescence who can write was a part of this study.

Exclusion Criteria

- The adolescence who was not interested to write their feelings was omitted from the study.
- Adolescence with other issues was excluded.
- Those who can't write were excluded

RESULTS & INTERPRETATION

Table 1 Showing the effect on Expressive Writing Therapy on Mental Health of Abused Adolescence

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	P- value
Expressive Writing Therapy	Mental health	10	15	2.582	0.00**

From Table 1, it is evident from the p- value that there is significant effect on Expressive Writing Therapy on the Mental Health of Abused Adolescence. The stated hypothesis (**H₁ there is a significant effect of Expressive Writing Therapy on Mental Health**) is accepted.

Table 2 Showing the relationship between pre- test and post- test on Mental Health of Abused Adolescence

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Pearson Correlation
Pre-test (Mental Health)	10	18.70	2.214	0.004*
Post-test (Mental Health)	10	3.70	1.337	

From Table 2, it is inferred that there is significant relationship between the Mental Health of the Abused Adults in terms of an intervention strategy. The stated hypothesis (**H₂ there is a significant relationship between the pre- test and post- test**) is accepted.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that,

1. As the individuals reveal their repressed emotion through the form of writing, their long-term worries on the traumatic experience is been expelled out and they experience a relief which in turn impacts their mental health.
2. Based on the objective observations of the individuals during the intervention session, few individuals had a burst out experience as they cried and took a long time to complete their writing.
3. On the basis of subjective experience of the individual, they experienced resentment whereas no sooner the session they experienced a relief and had a boosted self – confidence.

Limitations

The following are the limitations of the study,

- The study may trigger the emotion and the individual may experience emotional outburst.
- The individual may involuntarily get attrited.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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