



## The Effectiveness of Life Skills Training on Increasing the Rate of General Health of Parastoo Rehabilitation Center Employees

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**ABSTRACT:** The present investigation was aimed to investigate the effectiveness of life skills training on increasing the rate of general health of Parastoo rehabilitation center employees. The method of the research was of experimental type with pre-test, post-test with control group and random assignment of subjects. The population consisted of 40 employees of Parastoo rehabilitation center were employed in 2014. The statistical sample of the research consisted of 24 individuals who were assigned in two groups of 12 individuals (12 of them were assigned in a control group and 12 of them were assigned in an experimental group randomly). The method of data collection was based on Goldberg's general health questionnaire (GHQ-28) and Hiller's general health questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was 0.84 based on Cronbach's alpha method. Moreover, the questionnaire was confirmed by the related specialists in order to check the reliability of the questionnaire. The data analysis was carried out through implementation of the questionnaire in SPSS software in two parts of descriptive (average, median, variance, standard deviation, frequency distribution tables and graphs) and deductive (covariance analysis). The findings demonstrate that life skills training lead to increase in the rate of general health and its dimensions (reducing the symptoms of anxiety, depression, physical and social issues).

**Keywords:** Life Skills, General Health, Anxiety symptoms, Social problems, Physical Problems

ORIGINAL ARTICLE  
Received 14 Jun. 2014  
Accepted 20 Aug. 2014

### INTRODUCTION

One of the aspects of positive and constructive performance evaluation in any organization and institution is physical and mental health of their employees and human resources. Undoubtedly, this aspect plays an important role in the guarantee of dynamism and efficiency of the organization in fulfilling the main goals and services. The importance of the point is more obvious in some organizations such as hospitals and provision of health services. For instance, Parastoo rehabilitation center that gives services to 110 psychiatric patients including Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective and bipolar disorder and depression, and more than 40 employees provide health services.

General health is one of the most important criteria for human health, which covers social, physical and psychological aspects. There are several definitions for mental health. According to Adler, mental health could be specific objectives, appropriate familial and social relationship, assisting fellows and control of emotions and feelings (Wenzel et al., 2011). Roger's pattern from healthy personality and mental health is a highly effective human with full performance who takes advantage of all abilities and talents and has characteristics such as preparation for the gaining experience, feeling free and innovation (Avison et al., 2012). Caplan defined general health as continuous adaptation to changing conditions and efforts to achieve moderation between internal demands and requirements of the changing environment. Therefore, individuals with high mental balance resist inevitable workplace failures and provide happy environment for themselves and their colleagues and even patients (Rahimian et al., 2013).

According to Truer and Duckmanton (2010), healthy and normal people in terms of general health realize their position in the family, social groups and work environment properly, and are able to communicate with others in a constructive relationship.

On the other hand, technical and scientific progresses in recent years provided many different problems for human beings, and dealing with these life pressure and acquiring individual and social skills were always part of human life which have been manifested in different ways. Serious attention and precise educational programming is needed in order to enhance the ability of individuals for encountering stressful issues, because ability in dealing with problems and issues plays an important role in the provision of mental health, individual success and healthy life (Javadi et al., 2013). Based on this, in the studying of behavioral disorders and social deviation, researchers know individual's disability in proper analysis of himself and real life situation, lack of feeling control and personal accomplishment to deal with difficult situations and lack of preparedness to solve life problems and issues properly as reasons for many disorders and behavioral abnormalities (Baker and Williams, 2009).

According to this, one of the applications of psychology in today's world is applying the principles of psychology in finding novel ways of living and prevention of personal, familial, social and job problems. Life skills trainings are among the application of psychology in different spheres of individual and social. The trainings are hold with the aim of promoting physical and mental health, and prevention of mental, physical and social health. These

skills promote individual's skills in dealing effectively with the demands of living with stress and act as a primary preventive factor (Wellford, 2005).

Life skills are a set of abilities that enhance adaptability and positive and effective behavior, so the person can adopt responsibilities associated with his social role without damaging him or others, and can deal with routine life challenges and problems effectively (Pitman, 2004). Life skills are a set of mental capabilities that provide positive adaptability fields and enable the individual to accept his social responsibilities and to deal with daily demands, expectations and problems and working and administrative concerns without without damaging him or others (Kamian et al., 2008). In fact, the purpose of training life skills is to enhance psychosocial abilities and consequently, preventing the development of harmful behaviors to health and promotion of mental health (Nouri and Mohammadkhani, 2008).

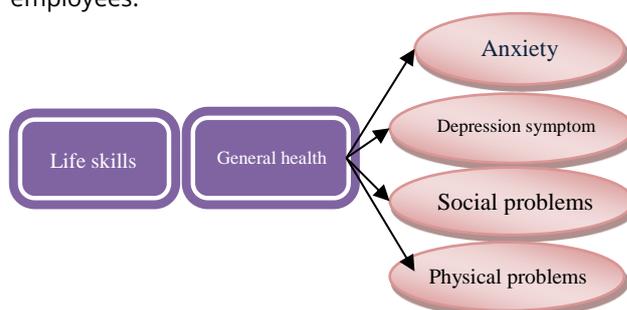
According to Albertyn et al. (2011), training life skills helps individuals to be flexible against changes, own higher self-esteem and show more abilities in controlling problems and issues. Many researches have been conducted in the field of the effectiveness of life skills trainings. Fore instance, Wenzel et al. (2011) demonstrated in an investigation that life skills trainings affect solving problems, self-awareness skills, self-supervision, coping skills, reality measurement skills, psychosocial competency, motivation and reduction of job stress. Botvin and Griffin (2013), Camble (2006), Ashouri et al. (2013), Amiri Bermakoumi (2012) and Yadavari (2006) studied the effect of life skills training on mental health, self-esteem, and stress reduction, promotion of mental health level, communication skills, decision-making skills and excitement management in separate researches. Moreover, Rahimian Bougar et al. (2013), Rahmanpour et al. (2012), and Khodabakhsh and Mansouri (2011) confirmed the effectiveness of life skills training on individuals' general health in separate investigations on students.

Faramarzi et al. (2011) declared in an investigation entitled "effectiveness of group training of life skills on the mental health of women who have disable husband" that training of these skills leads to their general health promotion. Conrad et al. (Javadi et al., 2013) concluded in their research, which was about improvement of life skills and self-confidence of a hospital's employees, that self-confidence improved in those employees dramatically. Gask et al., showed in their research that communication skills trainings lead to improvement of assessment, depression management and general health promotion in general practitioners. Gharabi et al. provided a life skills training course within 10 weeks for 84 women employed in a university, and demonstrated in the

semi-experimental research that the course leads to reduction in depressive, anxiety, psychosomatic disorders and social issues symptoms in the participants. Therefore, according to the important and significant role of employees general health in providing better services to the clients on one hand, and importance and application of life skills in the promotion of individuals' mental health level in the society on the other hand, the present investigation is aimed to investigate the effectiveness of life skills training on increasing the rate of general health of Parastoo rehabilitation center employees. In fact, does the training of life skills lead to increase in the rate of general health of Parastoo rehabilitation center employees? The following hypotheses and the conceptual model of the research are provided in the following in line with the previous question (Rahmanpour and Sharifi, 2012).

Main hypothesis (Ha): life skills training leads to increase in the level of employees' general health in Parastoo rehabilitation center.

First sub-hypothesis (Hb1): life skills training leads to reduction in symptoms of anxiety of Parastoo rehabilitation center employees. Second sub-hypothesis (Hb2): life skills training leads to reduction in symptoms of depression of Parastoo rehabilitation center employees. Third sub-hypothesis (Hb3): life skills training leads to reduction in social problems of Parastoo rehabilitation center employees. Fourth sub-hypothesis (Hb4): life skills training leads to reduction in physical problems of Parastoo rehabilitation center employees.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual model of the research

**MATEREALS AND METHODS**

Since the present investigation is aimed to investigate the effectiveness of life skills training on the general health of a rehabilitation center employees, the method of the research was of experimental type with pre-test, post-test with control group and random assignment of subjects. Life skills, as an independent variable, were taught within 10 sessions in Parastoo rehabilitation center employees and general health, as a dependent variable, was checked in the pre-test and post-test. The effect of pre-test on post-test was controlled through statistical analysis of covariance analysis.

The population consisted of all the employees of Parastoo rehabilitation center, who were employed in 2014. The general health questionnaire was distributed among 40 of the employees as a pre-test in order to implement the research, and those who got lower scores were classified into two groups of 12 people.

The data collection tool in the investigation was general health questionnaire (GHQ) with 28 questions. The questionnaire was presented by Goldberg and Hiller with 12, 28, 30 and 60 questions forms. They were aimed to design, recognize and identify mental disorders in different environments and centers. The questionnaire consisted of 4 scales and 7 questions were assigned for each scale. Questions number 1 to 7 were related to physical symptoms scale, questions number 8 to 14 were related to symptoms of anxiety and sleep disorders, questions number 15 to 21 were related to symptoms of social performance and questions number 22 to 28 were related to symptoms of depression.

The test was used comprehensively in researches. Goldberg and Marie (1988, quoted by Camble, 2006) reported the reliability coefficient of the test equal to 0.82 in a meta-analysis. In the present

investigation, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used in order to check the reliability and it was equal to 0.84. Moreover, the content validity were used in order to check the validity of the questionnaire and for this purpose, the relevant experts verification was utilized.

The data analysis of the implementation of the general health questionnaire was carried out through SPSS software in two parts of descriptive (average, median, variance, standard deviation, frequency distribution tables and graphs) and deductive (covariance analysis).

**RESULTS**

The indicators of the descriptive variables of general health and its dimensions (anxiety, depression, physical and social problems) in pre-test and post-test in control and experimental group are shown in Table 1.

As it is obvious in table 1, the mean of general health of experimental group is 65.19 and 50.03 in the pre-test and post-test, respectively, and they are 64.73 and 63.33 for the control group. In order to check the research hypotheses, covariance analysis was carried out that the results are mentioned in table 2.

**Table 1.** Mean and standard deviation of employees' general health in pre-test and post-test, experimental group and control group

Statistical indicators Variables	Groups	Tests	Number	M	SD
Physical symptoms	Exp. Group	Pre-test	12	15.49	4.86
		Post-test	12	11.86	4.35
	Con. Group	Pre-test	12	15.64	4.79
		Post-test	12	14.96	4.43
Anxiety symptoms	Exp. Group	Pre-test	12	14.24	3.03
		Post-test	12	8.44	1.92
	Con. Group	Pre-test	12	14.57	3.25
		Post-test	12	14.84	3.36
Social symptoms	Exp. Group	Pre-test	12	18.82	4.84
		Post-test	12	13.43	3.38
	Con. Group	Pre-test	12	19.56	4.51
		Post-test	12	19.23	4.37
Depression symptoms	Exp. Group	Pre-test	12	16.64	4.26
		Post-test	12	9.51	3.02
	Con. Group	Pre-test	12	15.29	4.64
		Post-test	12	14.3	3.83
Total score of general health	Exp. Group	Pre-test	12	65.19	7.06
		Post-test	12	48.03	7.29
	Con. Group	Pre-test	12	64.73	5.22
		Post-test	12	63.33	6.93

**Table 2.** Results of covariance analysis on the mean values of general health

statistical indicators variables	M <sup>2</sup>	DOF	F	Sign. P	test power
physical symptoms	124.65	1	12.46	0.001	0.56
anxiety symptoms	182.73	1	26.75	0.001	0.64
social symptoms	273.21	1	21.48	0.001	0.61
depression symptoms	249.62	1	36.64	0.001	0.69
total score of general health	1328.26	1	56.34	0.001	0.76

As it was obvious in table 2, the data analysis was carried out through covariance analysis and the results are mentioned in the following.

The main hypothesis and sub-hypotheses: life skills trainings lead to increase in the level of general health and its dimension (decrease in physical, anxiety, social and depression symptoms) in the employees of Parastoo rehabilitation center. According to table 1, since the F values obtained for the general health variable and its dimensions (decrease in physical, anxiety, social and depression symptoms) are higher than the significance level, the research hypotheses are confirmed. Therefore, all the hypotheses are significance at 0.95 significance level and it could be concluded that life skills trainings lead to increase in the level of general health and its dimension in the employees of Parastoo rehabilitation center.

## DISCUSSION

According to the fact that mental health of the employees of health care centers are in relation with the quality of their performance in taking care of patients and clients, existence of mental and physical health and healthy work environment and having mental health in all organizations including Parastoo rehabilitation center, which delivers services to psychiatric patients, is so necessary.

As we mentioned before, life skills trainings lead to increase in the level of general health and its dimension (decrease in physical, anxiety, social and depression symptoms) in the employees of Parastoo rehabilitation center. The results of the present investigation were in line with the findings of other researchers such as Wenzel et al. (2011), Baker and Williams (2009), Camble (2006), Botvin and Griffin (2013), Faramarzi et al. (2011), Rahimian Bougar et al. (2013), Rahmanpour et al. (2012), Ashouri et al. (2013), Amiri Bermakoumi (2012), Yadavari (2006) and Khodabakhsh and Mansouri (2011).

In order to explain more about the findings, it can be said that (Albertyn et al., demonstrated) life skills trainings help people to deal with changes more properly, have higher self-esteem and show more control in confronting with issues and problems. In fact, the purpose of life skills trainings is enhancing social-mental capabilities and eventually, preventing creation of harmful behaviors to hygiene and promotion of mental health level (Nouri and Mohammadkhani, 2008).

According to Pitman (2004), life skills are a set of abilities that enhance adaptability and positive and effective behavior, so the person can adopt responsibilities associated with his social role without

damaging him or others, and can deal with routine life challenges and problems effectively. Moreover, Wellford (2005) believes that these skills promote individual's skills in dealing effectively with the demands of living with stress and act as a primary preventive factor. In this regard, Shamloo (Javadi et al., 2013) stated that ability in dealing with problems and issues plays an important role in the provision of mental health, individual success and healthy life. Wenzel et al. (2011) demonstrated in an investigation that life skills trainings affect solving problems, self-awareness skills, self-supervision, coping skills, reality measurement skills, psychosocial competency, motivation and reduction of job stress. Therefore, it seems that the factors mentioned below play important role in the improvement of employees' general health status.

Finally, it should be said that there are so many people who did not learn specific methods and ways of dealing with issues, stress management and statement of their own feeling in our society. Many people usually use inhibitory and avoidance reactions such as disobedience, breaking the law, cheating and aggression in dealing with environmental threats and problems. Therefore, if we count these behaviors as a result of improper training patterns and accept the fact that the society and family were unable in transferring basic and fundamental life skills to the person, the importance of planning for life skills trainings will be much more obvious (Ashouri et al., 2013). Consequently, if we are looking for someone who have mental health (quoted from Oison et al., 2012), means someone who owns features such as readiness to gain experiences, feeling free, creativity, high mental balance and resistance in dealing with inevitable failures of life and work environment, we had to pay more attention to life skills trainings.

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