

The Effect of Meaning-Centered Group Psychotherapy on Promoting Meaning in Lives of Individuals With Spinal Cord Injury

Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin
1–8
© Hammill Institute on Disabilities 2023
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/00343552231199244
rcb.sagepub.com



Mohammadreza Abed, PhD¹, Hasan Rezaei-Jamalouei, PhD², Zohreh Raeisi, PhD²,
Mojtaba Ansari Shahidi, PhD², and Mahdi Taheri, PhD³

Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of Meaning-Centered Group Psychotherapy (MCGP) on promoting meaning in the lives of individuals with spinal cord injury. This single-blind study was quasi-experimental with pre-test, post-test, follow-up, and experimental and control groups. Forty-three patients with poor meaning in life were selected by purposive sampling and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The experimental group received MCGP, while the control group received no intervention. The data were collected by the Meaning in Life Questionnaire and analyzed by multivariate analysis of covariance. The results revealed significant differences between the post-test and follow-up scores of the experimental and control groups regarding the presence of meaning in life and the search for meaning in life. Also, no significant difference was found between the post-test and follow-up scores of the experimental group, which demonstrated the stability of the treatment effects. In general, MCGP significantly improved the meaning in the lives of patients with spinal cord injury.

Keywords

spinal cord injury, Meaning-Centered Group Psychotherapy (MCGP), meaning

Introduction

Spinal cord injury is damage to the spinal cord that results in decreased motor function or other abilities. Unlike some other parts of the body, the spinal cord cannot repair itself if damaged, so individuals with spinal cord injury will suffer lifelong physical impairment (International Spinal Cord Society, 2013). Previous studies (e.g., Lee & Green, 2002; Miglirioni et al., 2008; Singh et al., 2008) reported that individuals with spinal cord injury might experience biological, psychological, and social adaptation problems. Saulino and Keenan (2012) argue that spinal cord injury might be different from other life-threatening injuries because many of the negative consequences of this injury remain for the rest of the patients' life. The belief in losing control makes the patients feel helpless (Dickson et al., 2008). Due to spinal cord injury, physical functions, routine activities, future plans, and cognitions change, so identity is also affected (Magenuka, 2006). Furthermore, psychological and rehabilitation care is essential for positive adjustment after the spinal cord injury.

Some researchers (e.g., Simpson & Jones, 2013; White et al., 2008) investigated the factors that facilitate

adaptation and resilience after spinal cord injury, one of which is strengthening the meaning in life (White et al., 2010). Castro et al. (2020) reported that most patients with spinal cord injury considered life meaningful, although they did not explicitly search for meaning. Besides, a significant relationship was found between life satisfaction and meaning in life.

When a traumatic event, such as spinal cord injury, causes dramatic changes in an individual's life, the meaning and purpose of life might change as well. The essential requirement is that the injured persons should have a meaningful life conforming to their beliefs because studies conducted on the meaning-making process in individuals with spinal cord injury revealed that lack of purposefulness

¹Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran

²Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

³Sadjad University, Mashad, Iran

Corresponding Author:

Hasan Rezaei-Jamalouei, Department of Psychology, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad 8514143131, Iran.

Email: rezaeijamalouei@gmail.com