

## Effective Methods of Family Education in Reducing Anxiety, Aggression and Depression in Youth

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### Abstract

The research purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness of family educational cause in decrease of anxiety, aggressive, and depression for Youth. Therefore, employing a semi-experimental method, this investigation as random 90 members of mother students that they studied in intermediate in 2012 in Tehran city chosen that at first performance reflection questionnaire then as random distribution to the three groups: Two groups under test, between 13 meeting family educational with speech and argument method and second group family educational with playing film method. After education had given second questionnaire parallel to first questionnaire to the all members and completed by them. Student also at first and after education completed (SCL 90) questionnaire follow education their mothers. For analyzing data we used ANOVA test in SPSS software. For answering this investigation we choose probable level  $\alpha=0.5$ . Answer displayed family educational with speech than to playing film argument method caused to be changed mothers reflection and decrease of the juvenile depression, anxiety, and aggression.

**Key words:** Family Educational, Attitude, Depression, Anxiety, Aggressive

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### Introduction

Family is one of the main and fundamental social entities which is considered as the foundation of social life. It is as an intermediate by which many social norms and cultural heritage can be transferred (unpublished observations). Educating the family is essential so that the parents are equipped with effective techniques to behave appropriately with children, and makes them aware of proper upbringing methods, and help them in order to play their roles [1]. This paper is aimed at clarifying any effect of educational program for families (parents) on changing the perspectives and hence, decreasing psychosocial problems of teenagers, based on the research results. Therefore, educating the family can be considered as a necessity and an influential step towards recognizing and decreasing spiritual problems in teenagers as well as a basis for teenagers' development in different dimensions. The concept of perspective is of importance in psychology. According to the current studies, once perspective and behavior match in practice, goal and time, there is a significant and strong relationship between them. We were going to answer this question if there is any relation between perspective and behavior. Allport [2] knows perspective as the most distinct and essential concept in social psychology. He claims that "perspective is a state of mental and neurotic preparation organized through experience, and has a directive and dynamic effect on one's response to objects and occasions". Baron asserts, in his known early study on the relation between perspective and behavior, that it is possible to predict prejudicial behaviors through people's personal reports about their own prejudices [3]. Davidson and Jackard showed three levels of concordance, i.e. concordance in goal, practice and time with relation between perspective and behavior [4]. Another research has been done in Tehran, entitled the effects of educational programs for parents on their upbringing awareness. The results show that the psychological upbringing courses for parents have positive effects, and there found positive effects of Islamic education on upbringing awareness [5]. The results of a research conducted in social-educational center of Florida University show that the educational courses for family can influence on decreasing aggressive behaviors among children whose parents were educated [6]. Alder proved that increasing the parents' awareness through education results in decreasing anxiety and depression in children [7]. Keruso asserts, according to his findings, that: there is an interrelation between decrease in children depression and parent's positive perspectives towards upbringing; this interrelation emerges to a great extent (80%). That is, parents' positive perspectives towards children's emotional issues can decrease depression level in their children [8]. Another study in 2008, entitled "new samples on guiding family's support and educational policies", was conducted in Minnesota and Missouri, America. The results show that educational places for family in early ages of the children in Minnesota can help the parents to improve their ability to care and educate their children [9]. The results of another research entitled "children with particular educational needs and parents' knowledge of Educational System's method and supervision" in special educations in England (unpublished observations) indicated that parents do not understand all assessment methods and the ways of expressing needs by children and such parents have relationship with their children's teachers only, not any other educational experts such as counselor, the school, the principal, physical education teacher or the psychologist. Hence, they have the most challenging problems with their children [10]. In the all mentioned researches, there can be seen that parents should be knowledgeable of educational issues in upbringing their children; they can get the information directly or indirectly. There are various ways to emphasize on these educational programs, and coordinating the parents with modern methods and different skills by educational courses for families. These ways may result in decreasing depression level and anxiety as well as reducing aggressive behaviors in children.

## Materials and method

### Research population and sampling

The population in this study is the high school students' mothers in the educational year 2011-2012. The sampling method is cluster- multistage, in which there selected 90 mothers whose children filled the SCL90 questionnaire and gain scores higher than the average (1.79, 1.47, and 1.10) in sub-measures depression, anxiety and aggression respectively. They were sorted in two test groups (one by discussion and the other by playing a film) and a control group randomly. One of the test groups attended 13 sessions (weekly) in educational class, and learned some issues about teenagers and their problems, their features and characteristics, causes of emerging psychic problems, their personality problems, recognizing these problems and finally the ways how to prevent emergence social-psychological problems. The second group watched some educational films in several sessions in educational courses for family. The themes were most about the teenagers, their problems and challenges, and the ways of appropriate behavior with the teenagers with some personality problems. Moreover, at the end of the educational course, the three groups answered a questionnaire on upbringing perspectives. The students, like their mothers, were classified in three groups. Two test groups whose mothers passed the educational course and one control group whose mothers received no education. The students answered the questionnaire SCL90 before starting educational classes for their mothers and after ending the course.

### The measurement tools

The questionnaire of upbringing perspective: this questionnaire consists of 25 items, each has four options as "totally agree", "agree", "disagree" and "totally disagree", and the number value for each is 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. This questionnaire examines two process and content dimensions in upbringing methods. The mothers, under the researcher's supervision and advice, answered the questionnaire at the beginning and ending the course. The validity in pre-test is  $r_{tt} = 0.62$  and in post-test is  $r_{tt} = 0.79$ , concluding that the measurement tools in this research is of high validity. Also its stability in the two process and content factors is of total 75%, which shows acceptable stability for a questionnaire. *The questionnaire SCL90*: Derogatis et al. introduced this test in 1973 [11], and was revised based on clinical experiences and psychoanalytic analysis. Its final form was provided in 1976. Derogatis et al. [12] reported the internal validity of this test as satisfactory, according to Alpha coefficient. The scores SCL90 show 9 dimensions of the illness symptoms and 3 total indexes.

This questionnaire has 29 items, each includes 5-degree range of sadness level with 5 options "none", "a little", "somewhat", "very", "very much", the number values are 0 (for "none") and 4 (for "very much").

### Procedure

In this research, the educational classes were held in 13 sessions, each lasted for 1hour 30 minutes, twice a week. The administration stages are described in details as follows:

Session 1: Introducing the members, knowing the rules, stating the goals and the number of the sessions

Session 2: Teaching the role of family in forming the children's personalities

Session 3: Expressing the dimensions of teenagers' development and providing the condition for the maximum development

Session 4: Recognizing the physical, cognitive and psychological changes in teenagers

Session 5: Recognizing teenagers' needs and problems

Session 6: Recognizing the social problems of aggression, anxiety and depression

Session 7: Recognizing the behavioral abnormalities affected by problems, and the preventing ways

Session 8: Recognizing the effect of religious education, and a balanced family on decreasing teenagers' behavioral abnormalities

Session 9: Creating a better social relationships in adolescence

Session 10: Teaching courage

Session 11: Taking responsibility as a way to improve the social relationships

Session 12: Teaching the religious instructions in life

Session 13: Summarizing, concluding and administrating post-test

Throughout the sessions, we attempt at making infrastructures of mutual understanding, collaboration, sympathy, interaction and cooperation among the family members as well as promoting knowing, awareness, and improving the parents' educational and training skills.

## Results

Analyzing and comparing the gained data in pre-test and post-test in experimental groups, and pre-test and post-test in the control group, we formed a Table of frequency distribution, and calculated the average, and standard deviation in each group. To infer, the data of this research is analyzed by T test methods and covariance (ANCOVA) and  $\chi^2$  (K square).

**Table 1.** The number, average, standard deviation, standard error of the questionnaire SCL90 in pre-test

Groups	Number	Average	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group Discussion	30	1.85	0.69	0.12
Playing Film	30	1.95	0.82	0.15
Control	30	2.04	0.72	0.13

**Table 2.** The number, average, standard deviation, standard error of the questionnaire SCL90 in post-test

Groups	Number	Average	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group Discussion	30	1.20	0.3	0.05
Playing Film	30	1.65	0.76	0.31
Control	30	2.45	0.57	0.31

According to Table 1 and 2, the average in group 1 decreased from 1.85 in pre-test to 1.20 in post-test. Therefore, we may conclude that the group discussion for mothers led in decrease in anxiety, depression and aggression in their children. In the second method (playing films) the average decreased from 1.95 in pre-test to 1.65 in post-test, indicating that playing film also led in decrease in anxiety, depression and aggression in the students. However, the rate of decrease was not as much as the first method.

**Table 3.** the number, average, standard deviation, and standard error in the questionnaire in pre-test

Groups	Number	Average	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
<b>Group Discussion</b>	30	52.72	15.27	0.052
<b>Playing Film</b>	30	63.10	22.22	0.041
<b>Control</b>	30	27.65	9.25	0.047

**Table 4.** The number, average, standard deviation, and standard error in the questionnaire in post-test

Groups	Number	Average	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
<b>Group Discussion</b>	30	66.01	24.22	0.04
<b>Playing Film</b>	30	63.65	22.21	0.04
<b>Control</b>	30	21.5	6.22	0.04

As Table 3 and 4 shows, the average increased from 52.75 in pre-test to 66.01 in post-test, indicating the effect of educating family (the group discussion method) on changing the parents' perspectives. In the second group (playing films) the average in pre-test was 63.10 and in post-test was 63.65, which shows no significant difference, concluding that playing film had minor effects on changing the parents' perspectives. In the third group (control) the average decreased from 27.65 in pre-test to 21.5 in post-test, showing that the control group had negative effect on changing the parents' perspectives. As a result, the group discussion method is more effective on changing the parents' perspectives.

**Table 5.** Describing the improvement process of the students in the three variables (anxiety, aggression, depression) in pre-test and post-test

	The first group (group discussion)	The second group (Playing Film)	The third group (Control)
<b>Anxiety</b>	1.48	1.26	2.24
<b>Aggression</b>	2.4	2.3	1.98
<b>Depression</b>	1.68	2.3	1.92

**Table 6.** Describing the improvement process of the students in the three variables (anxiety, aggression, depression) in post-test

	The first group (group discussion)	The second group (Playing Film)	The third group (Control)
<b>Anxiety</b>	1.09	1.1	2.93
<b>Aggression</b>	1.1	2.0	2.06
<b>Depression</b>	1.43	1.85	2.38

According to Table 3, there is a significant decrease in the rates of anxiety, aggression, and depression in pre-test in comparison to ones in post-test, particularly the group discussion had the highest effect on increasing the health and decreasing these three variables. The rate of this decrease in the playing film method is less than the first method. We observe decrease in health rate and improvement in the control group, while the rates of anxiety, aggression and depression increased. In other words, comparing these three methods (group discussion, playing film, and control), the first method has the highest and evident effect on increasing the teenagers' health and improvement. T test can make valid results if the societies are one-dimensional, or normal. Hence, T test can be a good component to deduct in this research, for two independent groups. According to the data attained in this research, we may conduct a test for these three groups. The results of this test are as follows:

**Table 7.** The T test for differences between groups 1 and 2 in pre-test (in students)

T	Freedom degree	Significance level
<b>0.57</b>	55	0.57

in table 7, the T test for difference between two groups 1 and 2 in pre-test with the freedom degree 55 is  $t = 0.57$ , statistically is not significant; there is no significant relation between these two groups.

**Table 8.** The T test for the difference between groups 1 and 2 in post-test (in students)

T	Freedom degree	Significance level
<b>4.03</b>	58	0.00

in table 8, the T test for the difference between two groups 1 and 2 (group discussion and playing film) in post-test with the freedom degree 58 is 4.03, indicating that there is a significant relation between the first group (group discussion) and the second group (playing film) and the difference is significant ( $P < 0.001$ ).

**Table 9.** The T test for the difference between the two groups 1 and 3 in pre-test of the questionnaire SCL90 (students)

T	Freedom degree	Significance level
1.64	57	0.10

According to the results shown in the Table 9, the T test was measured as  $t = 1.64$ , with the freedom degree 57, statistically is not significant; there is no significant relation between the groups 1 and 3.

**Table 10.** The T test for the difference between the groups 1 and 3 in the post-test of the questionnaire SCL90

Tob	Freedom degree	Significance level
6.58	58	0.00

According to the Table 10, the T test with freedom degree 58 is 6.58, smaller than  $t$  in the Table, statistically significant; it indicates a significant difference between the average of the first group (group discussion) and that of the third group (control group). There is significant relation between the two groups. The difference is  $P < 0.001$ . In other words, educating in the form of group discussion had effects on decreasing the teenagers' mental- social problems.

**Table 11.** The T test for the difference between the groups 1 and 3 in pre-test of the upbringing questionnaire (mothers)

T	Freedom degree	Significance level
1.07	54	0.29

According to table 11, The results show that the observed  $t$  with the freedom degree 54 is  $t = 1.07$  that is smaller than the  $t$  in the Table  $t_{cr}(df = 54 \quad \alpha = 0.05) = 2$ . It is not significant statistically; in other words, there is no significant relation between these two groups.

**Table 12.** The T test for the difference between the two groups 1 and 3 in post-test of the upbringing questionnaire (mothers)

T	Freedom degree	Significance level
12.34	55	0.00

As the Table 12 shows, the  $t$  with the freedom degree 55 is  $t = 12.34$ , that is statistically significant ( $P < 0.001$ ), indicating a significant relation between the two groups 1 and 3. In other words, educating the families with the group discussion method led in changing the mothers' perspectives and as a result, decreased the teenagers' problems.

**Table 13.** The T test for the difference between the groups 2 and 3 (playing film and control group) in pre-test of the questionnaire SCL90 (students)

T	Freedom degree	Significance level
0.92	58	0.03

As shown in the Table 13, the observed  $t$  with the freedom degree 56 is  $t_{ob} = 0.92$  that is smaller than the  $T$  in the Table  $t_{cr}(df = 56 \quad \alpha = 0.05) = 2$ . It is not statistically significant, indicating no significant difference between these two groups.

**Table 14.** The T test for the difference between the groups 2 and 3 (playing film and control) in post-test of the questionnaire SCL90 (students)

T	Freedom degree	Significance level
2.11	58	0.00

According to the Table 14, the observed  $t$  with the freedom degree 58 is  $t = 2.11$  that is statistically significant, indicating the significant relation between the two groups 2 and 3, and the difference level is  $P < 0.03$ . In other words, educating the family with playing film can have effects on decreasing the teenagers' mental- social problems. However, the effect of the second method is less than the first method (due to the small observed  $t$  and high error coefficient in the second method compared with the observed  $t$  and error coefficient in the first method).

**Table 15.** The T test for the difference between the groups 2 and 3 in post-test of the upbringing questionnaire (mothers)

T	Freedom degree	Significance level
7.11	57	0.00

In table 15, the observed  $t$  with the freedom degree 57 is  $t = 7.11$ , statistically significant; it indicates that there is a significant difference between the two groups ( $P < 0.001$ ). The difference among mothers is due to difference in culture, social status, education, etc.

**Table 16.** The T test for the difference between the groups 2 and 3 in post-test of the upbringing questionnaire (mothers)

T	Freedom degree	Significance level
13.87	54	0.00

According to the Table 16, the observed t with the freedom degree 54 is  $t = 13.87$  that is statistically significant; indicating a significant difference between the first and the third group ( $P < 0.0001$ ). In other words, educating the family by playing film had effect on changing the mothers' perspectives, and hence, it is influential on preventing the teenagers' mental-social problems. As the correlation between the pre-test and post-test may harm the results of the research, the pre-test makes the people know about the post-test, and we cannot trust the average of the post-test. Therefore, to eliminate the effect of the correlation, we used the covariance analysis. Then, we selected a population with the average  $\mu$  and variance  $S^2$  randomly; that is selecting a subject has no effect on selecting another subject.

**Table 17.** the summary of the covariance analysis of pre-test group's effects in the questionnaire SCL90

The change resource	SS	df	MS	F	Significance level
Inter- groups	1.38	2	0.69	1.23	0.01
In-groups	47.12	84	0.56		
Total	48.5	86			

**Table 18.** The summary of the covariance analysis of post-test group's effects in the questionnaire SCL90

The change resource	SS	df	MS	F	Significance level
Inter- groups	15.83	2	7.91	18.97**	0.01
In-groups	36.29	87	0.41		
Total	52.12	89			

\*\* Significance in the level 0.01

Comparison of the observed values of F with critical values corresponding to the freedom degree specified in the given tests was shown in Table 17 and 18. According to the results,  $F = 18/97$   $P < 0.0001$ , the information gained shows that the effect of covariance is statistically significant. In other words, there is a significant relation among the groups in post-test, indicating positive effects of educating the families on decreasing the teenagers' anxiety, depression and aggression.

**Table 19.** The summary of covariance analysis of the pre-test group's effects in the upbringing questionnaire (mothers)

The change resource	SS	df	MS	F	Significance level
Inter- groups	3.38	2	1.69	26.78	0.01
In-groups	5.24	83	0.063		
Total	8.62	85			

**Table 20.** The summary of covariance analysis of the post-test group's effects in the upbringing questionnaire (mothers)

The change resource	SS	df	MS	F	Significance level
Inter- groups	11.13	2	5.56	113.111**	0.01
In-groups	4.084	83	0.049		
Total	15.218	85			

\*\* Significance in the level 0.01

The comparison of the observed values of F with critical values corresponding to the freedom degree specified in the given test is shown in the Table 19 and 20. Based on the results,  $F = 113/11$   $P < 0.0001$ , the information indicate that the effect of covariance is statistically significant.

**Table 21.** The summary of the results of Xi2 concordance coefficient ( $X^2$  mothers and students' pre-test)

	Xi2	Freedom degree	Significance level
Students' pre-test	6.38	2	0.04
Mothers' pre-test	26.83	2	0.00

**Table 22.** The summary of the results of Xi2 concordance coefficient ( $X^2$  mothers and students' post-test)

	Xi2	Freedom degree	Significance level
Students' pre-test	28.45	2	0.00
Mothers' pre-test	57.59	2	0.00

The concordance coefficient in Table 21 in the questionnaire SCL90 (students) is  $X_{ob}^2 = 6/38$  that is smaller than  $X_{cr}^2$ ;  $X_{cr}^2 (df = 2 \quad \alpha = 0/01) = 9/0$ , therefore, there is no significant difference among the groups. In the upbringing questionnaire (mothers), the concordance coefficient is  $X_{ob}^2 = 26/83$ , indicating cultural, status, and educational differences among the mothers.

The concordance coefficient in Table 22 in the questionnaire SCL90 (students) is  $X_{ob}^2 = 28/45$  that is bigger than  $X_{cr}^2$ ;  $X_{cr}^2 (df = 2 \quad \alpha = 0/01) = 9/0$ . In the upbringing questionnaire (mothers), the concordance coefficient is  $X_{ob}^2 = 57/59$  that is bigger than  $X_{cr}^2$  (Table)  $X_{cr}^2 (df = 2 \quad \alpha = 0/01) = 9/0$ , indicating the significant difference between the observed hypothetical frequencies. In other words, there is significant relation (with the certainty level 99%) between educating the families and perspective towards the students' mental-social problems. Put in other way, educating the families cause a decrease in the female teenagers' mental-social problems; this decrease is more in the first method (group discussion) than the other methods. In other words, there is a significant difference in pre-test among the groups, which indicates the positive effects of educating the families on the mothers' perspectives.

### Discussion and Conclusion

One of the most important advances in behavior therapy during two last decades was applying some particular therapies in the daily life. The term "educating parents" means guiding the parents in order to give advice and counsel them to deal with any interference with upbringing their children. The results of this paper show that educating the families, especially group discussions rather than playing film cause changes in mothers' perspectives as well as increasing their awareness about their children's characteristics and behavioral features. As implied by the results, the people's perspectives are due to their experience, education and knowledge they received in a particular occasion about a particular subject. Therefore, the particular occasions and subject are, in turn, influential on the way of thinking. Also, the implications of society towards phenomena affect the people's thinking. Based on the above mentioned matters, the concept of recognition play an important role; the need for recognizing the features and characteristics, recognizing abilities and disabilities, recognizing individual differences related to human features, and the causes of emerging different features and characteristics. Therefore, if parents and especially the parents whose children have some mental-social problems gain enough knowledge and recognition about their children, the children are able to express their talents and hence, their mental-social problems will decrease [13]. The prerequisite for pleasant behavior by parents is enough awareness and knowledge which should be achieved in different ways. One of these ways is educational courses for families that are common nowadays. This research showed that educating mothers can give the mothers enough knowledge since knowledge and awareness decreases and prevents mental-social problems [14]. The results showed that group discussion affected more than playing film, indicating it was more influential on changing the mothers' perspectives. This finding shows that educating mothers by group discussion can trustfully decrease anxiety, depression and aggression in teenagers. The second way, playing film, had less effects on changing perspectives and decreasing teenagers' mental-social problems (anxiety, depression and aggression) than the first one (group discussion). These findings are compatible with Baron's findings (Baron, 1984). Also, these findings are coordinated with Alder's findings [15]. The results show that the parents' knowledge and recognition of symptoms of anxiety and depression cause a decrease in expressing these feelings in children; these findings are compatible with Afrooz's findings. Giving advice to parents not only can make the parents self-confident, but can teach them how to behave and communicate with their children [16]. This research also showed that there is a direct relation between positive communication in the family and aggression in teenagers. And the appropriate behavior by the parents has a main and critical role on preventing such abnormalities and disobedience. These finding are compatible with Carter's research findings [17]. the teenagers are ready to accept the appropriate and pleasant ethical values, and so the parents and teachers should be the best samples. In this context, our studies showed that educating parents is successfully effective on modifying antisocial behaviors, compatible with Atkinson's findings. Based on the research done by this scientist, educating parents decreases about 60% aggression in 75% of the samples [18]. Our findings are compatible with the results found in Sandell's [19] and Krech's [20]. They found that the family can have a collective effect on teenagers' behavior if the other elements are unchanged. Moreover, there is strong correlation (80%) between teenagers' level of anxiety and depression with parents' positive perspectives towards upbringing. Also, the findings in this research are compatible with the results of a research conducted in Minnesota, showing that educating family can increase parents' abilities to decrease their children's aggression [21].

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