

Intervention proposal for emotional dependence in couple's relationship

RESUMEN

Aproximadamente un tercio de las parejas sufre Dependencia Emocional (De la Villa-Moral et al., 2018). Muchas personas llegan a perder su voluntad y/o control emocional por sus sentimientos hacia otra persona, e incluso son capaces de hacer cosas que en la vida hubieran imaginado (Castelló, 2000). Por tanto, el **objetivo** del presente estudio es diseñar una propuesta de tratamiento para la Dependencia Emocional en la pareja evaluada y contrastada por profesionales. Dicha propuesta está fundamentada en las bases de la Psicología Positiva y Mindfulness; y su objetivo es ayudar al paciente a superar la Dependencia Emocional con su pareja y guiarle a una relación sana para su bienestar y el de su entorno, fomentando los aspectos positivos del paciente, así como su calidad de vida. La propuesta se dirige a población adulta comprendida entre 18 y 40 años. Se han diseñado dos bloques de terapias; el bloque principal centrado en aspectos de la Psicología Positiva y Mindfulness; y un segundo bloque para aquellos que no presenten cambios clínicamente significativos, con terapias más generales y comunes. Para comprobar la eficacia del tratamiento, se cuenta con un juicio de psicólogos expertos en Psicología Clínica, a los cuales se les ha administrado un cuestionario sobre aspectos importantes de la intervención para comprobar su validez: adecuación de la extensión, su distribución, contenidos, metodología, número y tiempo de sesiones, etc. Se tiene en cuenta la importancia de un tratamiento integrador, que aborde aspectos de la Psicología Positiva, Mindfulness, y en su defecto, cognitivos-conductuales.

Palabras clave: Dependencia emocional, Psicología Positiva, Mindfulness, bienestar, pareja.

ABSTRACT

Approximately one third of couples are emotionally dependent (De la Villa-Moral et al., 2018). Many people come to lose their will and/or emotional control because of their feelings towards another person, and they are even capable of doing things they would have imagined in life (Castelló, 2000). Therefore, the aim of this study is to design a treatment proposal for Emotional Dependence in couple evaluated and contrasted by professionals. This proposal is based on the foundations of Positive Psychology and Mindfulness; and its objective is to help the patients to overcome his or her emotional dependence with his or her partner and guide him or her to a healthy relationship for his or her well-being and that of his or her environment, promoting the positive aspects of the patient, as well as his or her quality of life. The proposal is aimed at the adult population between 18 and 40 years of age. Two blocks of therapies have been designed; the main block focusing on aspects of Positive Psychology and Mindfulness; and a second block for those who do not present clinically significant changes, with more general and common therapies. In order to test the effectiveness of the treatment, a judgement has been made by expert psychologists in Clinical Psychology, who have been given a questionnaire on important aspects of the intervention to check its validity: adequacy of the extension, its distribution, contents, methodology, number and time of sessions, etc. The importance of an integrative treatment is taken into account, which addresses aspects of Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, and failing that, cognitive-behavioral.

Keywords: Emotional dependence, Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, well-being, couple, relationship.

INTERVENTION PROPOSAL FOR EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCE IN COUPLE'S RELATIONSHIP

Introduction

Emotional Dependence is a persistent pattern of unmet emotional needs that are inadequately met by other people (Castelló, 2000). In this case, with the partner. The individual manifests thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and behaviours that revolve around the need to bond closely with people who are important to him (Hirschfeld et al., 1977).

There are authors who consider emotional dependence as a personality disorder (Castelló, 2005), and others, as a behavioural addiction (Gómez-Llano, 2015). The intervention is proposed from the **Positive Psychology** (positive emotions and relationships) and **Mindfulness** (to regulate the patient's emotions and enhance their awareness). For those who don't obtain clinically significant changes, a second block of therapies is proposed in which the most relevant aspects of the problem are worked on (self-esteem, social skills, change of thinking, etc).

OBJECTIVES

- **Objective of the work** – To design a treatment proposal for Emotional Dependence in couple and evaluate it by professionals
- **Objective of the intervention** – To help the patient overcome his or her emotional dependence on his or her partner.
- **Specific objectives** - To increase the patient's levels of well-being by improving their mood, self-esteem, social skills and relationships with others; to enhance or increase the patient's positive affection, improve their quality of life and provide the individual with the necessary strategies to cope with dependency.

Method

TARGET GROUP:

People who are developing Emotional Dependence with their partner (between 18-40 years of age - early adulthood)

EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS:

- Clinical interview to evaluate emotional dependence (Castelló, 2005)
- IDE (Aiquipa, 2012).
- VIA Questionnaire of Personal Strengths by Seligman and Peterson (2004).
- NEO-PI-R (Costa and McCrae, 2002)
- Escala de Bienestar Psicológico (Cánovas, 2013).
- KIMS (Baer et al, 2004).
- MMPI-2-RF (Ben-Porath et al., 2008, 2011)
- Expert judgement evaluation questionnaire (Eugenia Carceller).

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION:

- **BLOCK 1 (Main block) – Positive Psychology and Mindfulness.**
 - All the patients.
 - Optimal well-being of the person, positive emotions and relationships.
 - Duration: weekly session of 1h / 1,5h.
 - Evaluation and follow-up session (two an six months later)
- **BLOCK 2 – Other techniques**
 - For those with no clinically significant changes.
 - Cognitive techniques.
 - Treatment adapted to each patient.
 - Same duration and periodicity between sessions.
 - Follow-up session (two and six months later).

Session 1	Emotional Management
Session 2	Mindfulness
Session 3	Self-acceptance
Session 4	Gratitude and encouraging positive emotions
Session 5	Pleasant activities
Session 6	Empowerment / autonomy
Session 7	Mindfulness
Session 8	Tolerating loneliness
Session 9	Relapse prevention

Session 1	Self-control guidelines
Session 2	Self-esteem training
Session 3	Healthing relationships
Session 4	Healthing relationships
Session 5	Relapse prevention

Results

- **Expert judgement evaluation questionnaire:**
- Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)
- Yes or no questions about additional resources, session time, number of sessions, methodology and contents.
- Collection of some socio-demographic data: gender, work sector, profession and years of experience.
- Assessment of extension, distribution, target population; contents, methodology, number, time of sessions; evaluation instruments; ease or not of implementation of techniques.



Comments: Applicable to individual format. Possibility of adding more specific techniques in the second block. Positive comments (originality of the work: two blocks, integration of therapies...)

Conclusion

Although therapists increasingly encounter this problem in their consultations (Cubas et al., 2004; Salcedo and Serra, 2012), it is a disorder that has not been much studied to date (Santamaria et al., 2015) nor is it included in current diagnostic manuals. If the intervention proves to be effective, the patient is expected to improve by enhancing the positive aspects of the intervention through innovative positive therapies.

Limitations:

- There is no evidence of similar interventions (impossibility of results).
- Novel main block techniques, there is not as much information or evidence-based treatments.

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