



## Lifestyle and Attachment Needs: Emotional-Focused Therapy Perspective

Siamak Samani<sup>1\*</sup>, Nadereh Sohrabi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Prof. Dep. Psychology, Shiraz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Prof. Dep. Psychology, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

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| <p><b>Abstract:</b> The study's main purpose was to check the effectiveness of the resilient marital relationship lifestyle to feed the attachment needs of young couples. To touch the research goal, an ABA single-subject design was used. The sample consisted of six young couples between 26 to 38 years old. The Resilient Marital Relationship Program (RMR Program) was used as an experimental intervention in this study. The RMR Program was designed to help Iranian young couples to cope with their marital conflicts by considering attachment needs. The RMR Program was focused on resilient beliefs, resilient lifestyles, resilient marital strategies, and, resilient marital techniques. The attachment needs scale, brief resilience scale, and healthy family life scale were used in this study. The intervention was run in 5 virtual space sessions with two virtual assessments for the first two stages (AB) and one for the second A stage of the design. Visual analysis and statistical Indexes revealed that attachment needs to improve after running the RMR Program. In sum, the RMR Program is an effective intervention for feeding the attachment needs of young couples.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Resilient Beliefs, RMR Program.</p> <p><b>Copyright © 2023 The Author(s):</b> This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution <b>4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0)</b> which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Research Paper</b></p>  |
|   | <p><b>*Corresponding Author:</b><br/> <i>Siamak Samani</i><br/>                 Associate Prof. Dep. Psychology,<br/>                 Shiraz Branch, Islamic Azad<br/>                 University, Tehran, Iran</p>   |
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### INTRODUCTION

According to the attachment theory, failure to meet the attachment needs of people can cause anxiety disorders. In the field of marital relations, attachment needs have been paid attention to by experts. These needs include the need for security, love, a sense of worth, and receiving support. Failure to meet these needs during marital interactions can cause failure in marital relationships. Failure to meet attachment needs often causes anger, worry, anxiety, aggression, stress, and fear (Wiebe & Johnson, 2016).

What couples observe in the process of not meeting attachment needs are secondary emotions such as anger, anxiety, and fear. These feelings and reactions are a sign of deeper problems in the field of attachment needs of couples. When the couple's relationship is threatened for any reason, couples feel insecure and show this insecurity with emotions such as anger, anxiety, fear, and aggression. For example, when a person does not receive emotional attention from her husband, she feels worried that this feeling is due to not meeting the need for attachment, i.e., not being loved.

According to the emotion-focused therapy model, emotion can be divided into two types: basic

emotions and secondary emotions. Basic emotions express attachment needs, and their fulfillment leads to feelings such as security, love, value, feeling of sufficiency, trust, and failure to meet attachment needs causes insecurity, lack of love, lack of value, feeling of inadequacy, and distrust. Such emotions are considered basic emotions. On the other hand, emotions such as anxiety, fear, anger, and aggression are examples of secondary emotions. Basically, during marital interaction and in the therapeutic room, what can be seen at first glance are secondary emotions.

Secondary emotions are often an obstacle to directly observing the basic emotions resulting from the lack of fulfillment of attachment needs in couples. However, observation of these emotions by the therapist is a diagnostic tool in emotion-focused couple therapy. Observation of secondary emotions by the therapist is a sign to diagnose attachment disorder in couples' relationships.

With this introduction, it can be concluded that the fulfillment of attachment needs during marital relations by husband and wife increases the quality of marital relations and the quality of life. Feeling safe, feeling loved, feeling supported, feeling valuable, and feeling adequate is the fulfillment of attachment needs.

On the other hand, failure to meet attachment needs causes fear, insecurity, aggression, and anxiety (Coan, 2010).

Efficiency and inefficiency in marital relationships determine the extent of meeting or not meeting attachment needs. Marital relationships as a system of beliefs, lifestyles, strategies, and life techniques have the right quality if they can meet the attachment needs of spouses in their two-way interaction. The more capable the quality of marital relations is, the better the attachment needs will be fed, and the weaker the ability of couples in marital relations, the less their attachment needs will be fed (Halchuk *et al.*, 2010; Halchuk *et al.*, 2010b). The quality of marital relations determines the level of secure attachment in couples. The adequacy of marital relationships depends on a set of beliefs, styles, strategies, and techniques that, in addition to meeting attachment needs, also increase resilience in marital relationships. In other words, marital relationships consist of a set of beliefs, lifestyles, strategies, and resilience techniques that determine the response to the needs of attachment between couples (Samani, 2020). The Resilient Marital Relationship Program (RMR Program) is designed to help Iranian young couples cope with their marital conflicts. The RMR Program was developed based on qualitative marital conflict studies.

## METHOD

This study was conducted in the form of a single-subject ABA design. The sample consisted of six young couples between 26 to 38 years old. The

participants in this research had a minimum of two years and a maximum of five years of married life and were referred to the family counseling center due to marital conflict caused by attachment problems. Participants in this study received the RMR program in six training sessions. The interval between training sessions was one week. The length of each session was 75 to 90 minutes. During this research, the participants were evaluated 6 times (two times in the baseline phase, two times in the intervention phase, and two times in the follow-up phase). The tools used in this research included: the attachment needs scale and efficient lifestyle scale. The attachment needs questionnaire consisted of 12 questions with a 5 points Likert scale (strongly agree=5, agree=4, have no opinion=3, disagree=2, and strongly disagree=1). This scale was set by researchers based on attachment theory and the Emotional-Focused therapy model. The content validity of this scale was confirmed by 5 experts familiar with attachment theory.

The efficient lifestyle scale was developed by Sohrabi (2020). This scale contains 28 questions and included 7 sub-scales: emotional relationship, private time with close people, time for fun and play, effective social network, respect and appreciation, quality of sleep, and, physical activity. The RMR program was implemented in the form of six virtual training sessions using the Skyroom application. The table below shows the contents of the RMR program. In this table, the content of the intervention program is presented in the four axes of resilient beliefs, resilient lifestyle, resilient marital strategies and techniques.

### Resilient marital relationship program

| Domain                       | Sub-domains   | Results   |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Resilient Beliefs            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No couple is problem free</li> <li>- I am not perfect</li> <li>- I make mistakes</li> <li>- I am here to make with you</li> <li>- We are different in feeling, thinking, behaving and our preferences</li> <li>- I need to learn more</li> </ul> | These beliefs help young couples regarding self-pruning, being ready for coping with marital conflicts, controlling anger and, taking spouse perspective.   |
| Resilient life style         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time for getting together</li> <li>- Reciprocal appreciation, Mutual understanding</li> <li>- Time for fun and play</li> <li>- Romantic relationship</li> <li>- Life and work balance</li> </ul>   | "Couples that play together stay together"<br>These items in life style provide basic needs such as security, to be understood, to be loved, feeling importance, taking attention, feeling support, feeling control |
| Resilient Marital strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Action-reaction management</li> <li>- Sexual interaction</li> <li>- Marital boundaries</li> <li>- Home care cooperation</li> <li>- Financial strategies</li> </ul>   | These strategies help young couples to manage their marital life such as sexual, financial, home cooperation, and external communication  |
| Resilient marital techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surprising each other</li> <li>- Caring spouse</li> <li>- Using emotional quotes</li> </ul>  | These techniques help young couples to refresh their relationship.  |

## FINDINGS

To analyze the data collected in this research, first, the average score of the participants in the attachment needs scale was evaluated in six stages and the efficient lifestyle scale three times by calculating the

descriptive indicators. Table No. 1 shows the average of the six couples participating in this study in different stages the baseline stage, the intervention stage, and the follow-up stage.

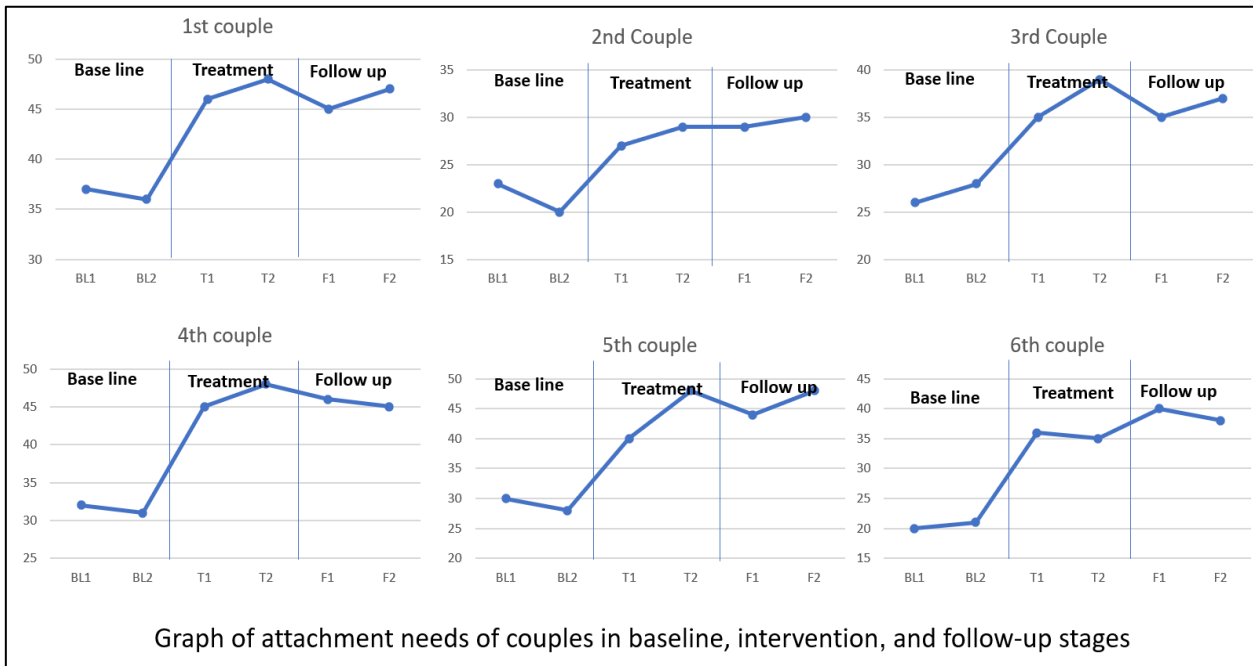
**Table 1: Average attachment needs of couples**

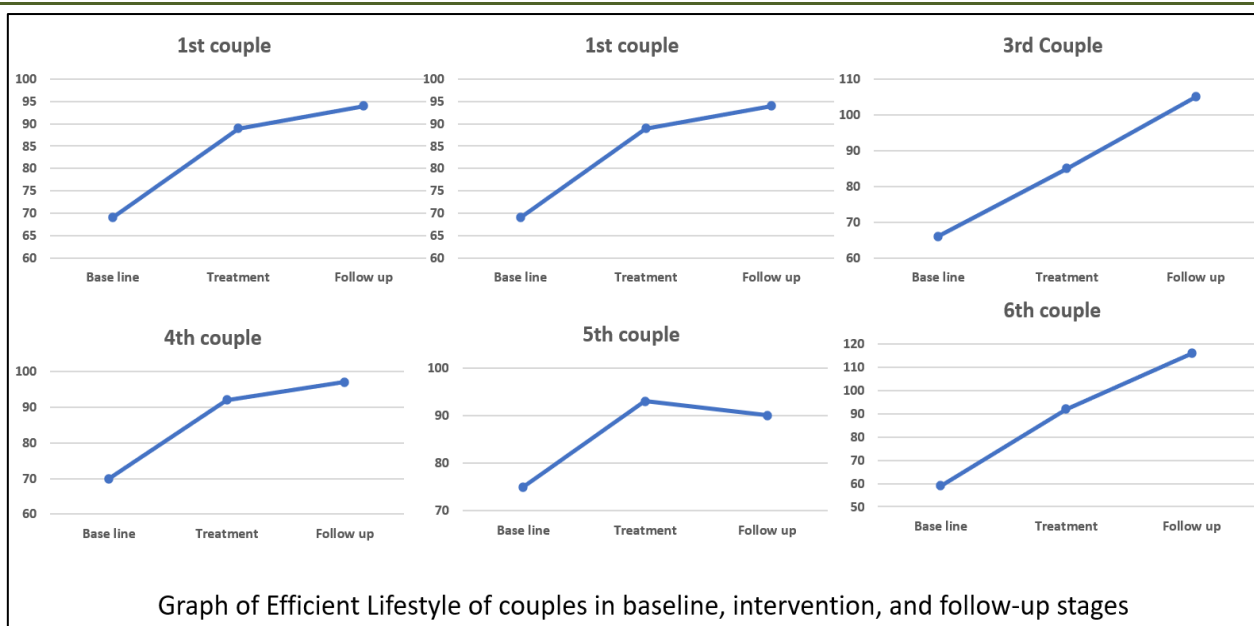
| Couple | Base Line(A) |    | Intervention(B) |    | Follow up(A) |    |
|--------|--------------|----|-----------------|----|--------------|----|
|        | 1            | 2  | 3               | 4  | 5            | 6  |
| 1      | 37           | 36 | 46              | 48 | 45           | 47 |
| 2      | 23           | 20 | 27              | 29 | 29           | 30 |
| 3      | 26           | 28 | 35              | 39 | 35           | 37 |
| 4      | 32           | 31 | 45              | 48 | 46           | 45 |
| 5      | 30           | 28 | 40              | 48 | 44           | 48 |
| 6      | 20           | 21 | 36              | 35 | 40           | 38 |

**Table 2: The average effective lifestyle of couples**

| Couple | Base Line(A) | Intervention(B) | Follow up(A) |
|--------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
|        | 1            | 2               | 3            |
| 1      | 69           | 89              | 94           |
| 2      | 57           | 80              | 98           |
| 3      | 66           | 85              | 105          |
| 4      | 70           | 92              | 97           |
| 5      | 75           | 93              | 90           |
| 6      | 59           | 92              | 116          |

The graphs below show the change in the slope and height of the values from the baseline phase (A) to the intervention phase (B) and follow-up (A).





As the graphics implemented, after the implementation of the marital resilience program, it is observed that the needs for attachment have a greater chance of supply. Lifestyle graphs can also be improved from the baseline to the intervention stage and the follow-up stage for the six participants.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that couples' attachment needs will be met by creating resilient beliefs in couples and changing their lifestyle and training strategies and techniques. Beliefs like no family are problem-free, and the belief that couples need to be repaired in life and replacement has been able to enhance their spouse's support. Also, changing the lifestyle by devoting private time to the spouse, expressing emotion to the spouse, appreciating the spouse, and establishing a fun activity with the spouse, nourish the needs of attachment. In addition to improving couples' beliefs and lifestyles, promoting life strategies such as participating in home affairs, regulating external communication, and managing actions and reactions has also made couples respond better to the needs of spouse attachment.

Overall, the results of this study show that upgrading resilient beliefs, lifestyles, and resilient strategies in couples can increase a sense of security, a sense of love, belonging, a sense of support, and valuable couples. The results of this study indicate that the marital resilience program is adequate to meet the attachment needs of couples and reduce marital conflicts. Using this program by couple therapists and

family therapists can significantly improve couple relationships.

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