

Effectiveness of Guided Imagery in Reducing Students Examination Anxiety

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Abstract: Anxiety management is one element of the lifestyle modification that is recommended for exam going students. Reduction in sympathetic arousal can be achieved through guided imagery technique through a series of audio and visual relaxation training. Aims: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of guided imagery relaxation program for reducing the anxiety level among exam going students. Methods: A randomized study consisting of 14 days relaxation technique with pre and post anxiety scores of 40 exam going students were randomly assigned to a 25 minutes audio visual relaxation of guided imagery program to experimental group and not for control group anxiety level scores were recorded to both groups. Results: For experimental group, the reduction in anxiety after 14 days intervention training was statistically significant, whereas anxiety level was same to control group. Conclusion: Significant anxiety reduction can be achieved through a 25 minute audio, video guided imagery relaxation program with exam going students. Guided relaxation is more effective in lowering anxiety level.

I. Introduction

Examinations are part of every curricular activity. Stressful feelings can alter the ability to think during examination. The sensation of having overwhelming nervousness can cause panicked thoughts to the mind. Preoccupation with stressful feelings would reduce the students thinking and their objectivity.

Anxiety causes the physical effects like heart palpitation, muscle weakness and tension, chest pain, shortness of breath or headaches. Anxiety also has some emotional effects over the individual who experiences it. The emotional effects include feelings of apprehension, irritability, restlessness, nightmares and obsessions.

The most common therapy for this disorder is the cognitive behavioral therapy. Guided imagery therapy is a cognitive behavioral technique in which under the guided instructions a client is guided in imagining a relaxing scene or series of experiences. It is a powerful technique, more often used to promote relaxation to provide therapeutic benefits, including lowering blood pressure, managing pain, reducing stress and anxiety, and even boosting immune system.

The findings of this study can help the students to practice this technique easily during the examination preparation time to achieve the desirable outcome.

Objective: The main objective of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of guided imagery on test anxiety among exam going students.

Assumption:

- Writing examination is an anxious situation.
- Guided imagery, proven to be effective in the treatment of anxiety, helps the students to feel better in controlling their emotions and thoughts contributing to a general improvement in the sense of confidence and wellbeing

Hypothesis: There is a significant difference in the exam anxiety level among exam going students who attended guide imagery session than those who do not.

Conceptual Framework: It was based on Modified Widenbachs helping art theory

Methodology: An experimental, randomized pretest, post test control group design was selected for this study.

Population: The population for this study was students of sree balaji college, Chennai.

Samples: The sample size of the study was 40 nursing students, 20 in the experimental group and 20 in the control group. The sample was selected using simple random technique, lottery method.

Tool: The tool consisted of two parts:

Section A: Demographic variables of examination going students which include age, gender, inhabitation, family monthly income and medium of instruction in the higher secondary level.

Section B: Consists of standardized test anxiety questionnaire developed by Nist and Diehl (1990). The tool consists of 10 items which focus on testing experiences of writing exams.

Data Collection Procedure:

The official permission was obtained to conduct the study. The investigator initially established rapport with the subjects. The samples were selected among exam going students of sree Balaji College, Chennai. The purpose of this study was explained to the subjects and consent was obtained from them. Pretest was administered to both experimental and control group using the same questionnaire. A 25 minute audio visual relaxation of guided imagery program was provided to the students in the experimental group for 14 days. Post test was conducted for experimental and control group with the same questionnaire with an interval of two weeks after the guided imagery program.

II. Major Findings

Regarding the gender of the students, 50 % (10) in the experimental group were females and 75 % (15) in the control group were females. In pre test for assessing the anxiety level of the experimental group revealed that 65% of subjects had unhealthy anxiety and 35% had healthy anxiety and for control group, 60% had unhealthy anxiety and 40% had healthy anxiety. In post test for assessing the anxiety level of experimental group revealed that 25% of subjects had healthy anxiety and 75% had no anxiety and for control group, 60% had unhealthy anxiety and 40% had healthy anxiety. In the experimental group, there was significant difference in the mean scores between the pretest and the posttest on the overall level of exam anxiety at P<.001 level.

In the control group, there was no significant difference on the mean scores between the pretest and the posttest on the overall level of exam anxiety. There was a highly significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the level of exam anxiety at P<.001 level.

During the posttest in the experimental group, there was a significant association between level of anxiety and medium of instruction at college. In the control group during the posttest, there was an association between the levels of anxiety gender of the students.

Distribution of level of anxiety among exam going students in experimental and control group (n=40)								
Level of exam anxiety	Experimental group (n=20)				Control group (n=20)			
	Pretest		Post test		pretest		posttest	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Unhealthy anxiety (76-100%)	13	65	-	-	12	60	12	60
Healthy anxiety (51-75%)	7	35	5	25	8	40	8	40
No anxiety (0 -50%)	-	-	15	75	-	-	-	-

III. Conclusion

The study findings conclude that guided imagery technique helps students to modify their negative thoughts and behavior in to positive ones. Students are taught to react to the situation positively. They are asked to express their ideas so that the conflict which thy experience gets resolved. Success images play an important role in calming fears. These thoughts help to manage the anxiety better.

Life's success is built upon success promoting belief. This is because mind does not know the difference between a real and an imagined experience. Guided imagery technique helps to reduce anxiety of students at all levels and is a skill that benefits in many ways.

References

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