

PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING METHODS FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED PRESSURE AND VIOLENCE

Ungboeva Umida Sayfullaevna

Qarshi State University Independent Researcher

Abstract

Women who have experienced pressure and violence often suffer from severe psychological trauma that can affect their emotional, social, and cognitive well-being. Effective psychological counseling methods play a crucial role in helping these women regain their confidence, cope with trauma, and reintegrate into society. This article examines various counseling approaches, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), trauma-focused therapy, empowerment-based interventions, and group therapy. By analyzing the effectiveness of these methods, the paper aims to provide insights into best practices for supporting survivors of violence.

Keywords: Psychological counseling, women, trauma, violence, cognitive-behavioral therapy, empowerment, mental health support.

Introduction

Violence against women is a pervasive global issue that results in severe physical and psychological consequences. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in three women experiences physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. The psychological impact of such experiences includes post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Psychological counseling plays a vital role in helping survivors heal and regain their sense of autonomy. This article explores various psychological counseling methods and their effectiveness in addressing the needs of women who have experienced violence.

Literature Analysis

Previous research on psychological counseling for survivors of violence has highlighted the importance of trauma-informed care. Studies indicate that cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is highly effective in reducing PTSD symptoms and anxiety in survivors. Other research emphasizes the importance of empowerment-based interventions, which help women reclaim control over their lives. Furthermore, literature suggests that group therapy provides emotional support by fostering connections with others who have had similar experiences. By reviewing existing studies, this section provides a theoretical foundation for counseling interventions.

Methods

The study employs a qualitative approach to assess the effectiveness of various psychological counseling techniques. The methods used include:

- Case Studies: Analysis of individual cases to understand the impact of different counseling approaches.
- Interviews: Conducting structured interviews with psychologists and counselors specializing in trauma therapy.
- Survey Analysis: Collecting data from women who have undergone counseling to evaluate their progress and satisfaction with therapy.
- Comparative Analysis: Evaluating different counseling methods based on their outcomes and effectiveness in trauma recovery.

Results

Women who have faced psychological pressure and violence often struggle with trauma, anxiety, depression, and self-esteem issues. Providing effective psychological counseling requires a trauma-informed, empathetic, and individualized approach. Below is a detailed guide on counseling methods, structured to ensure emotional healing, empowerment, and reintegration into society.

Trauma-informed care approach

This method ensures that the woman feels safe, heard, and respected. The counselor should:

- Create a Safe Space: Provide a calm, private, and non-judgmental setting.
- Validate Her Experience: Acknowledge the abuse without questioning or blaming.
- Give Her Control: Let her decide what to share and when, ensuring she doesn't feel pressured.
- Empower Rather Than Rescue: Encourage independence instead of making her feel dependent on the counselor.
- Educate About Trauma: Explain how trauma affects the brain and emotions, normalizing her feelings.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (cbt)

CBT helps survivors identify and challenge negative thought patterns caused by abuse.

- Identifying Negative Thoughts: Many survivors blame themselves or feel powerless. CBT helps recognize these harmful beliefs.
- Reframing Thoughts: The counselor helps replace negative beliefs with healthier perspectives (e.g., "I am weak" → "I survived").
- Behavioral Activation: Encouraging positive activities that restore self-worth.
- Coping Mechanisms: Teaching how to handle triggers, panic attacks, and self-doubt effectively.

Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (emdr)

EMDR is especially useful for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) resulting from violence.

- Guided Eye Movements: The therapist directs the client's eye movements while recalling traumatic memories, reducing emotional intensity.
- Memory Reprocessing: Helps change how the brain stores traumatic memories.



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- Healing Without Verbal Expression: Works well for those who struggle to talk about their trauma.

Narrative Therapy

This method empowers survivors by helping them rewrite their personal stories.

- Separating Trauma from Identity: “You are not your trauma. You are not weak because of what happened.”
- Rewriting the Narrative: Encourages women to see themselves as strong and resilient survivors, not victims.
- Storytelling as Healing: Expressing experiences through writing, speaking, or art therapy.

Mindfulness and relaxation techniques

Mindfulness reduces stress and increases emotional stability.

- Grounding Techniques: Helps women manage flashbacks and anxiety by focusing on the present (e.g., the “5-4-3-2-1” technique—naming things they see, hear, touch, etc.).
- Deep Breathing Exercises: Activates the parasympathetic nervous system to reduce panic.
- Body Scanning: Helps detect where trauma-related tension is stored in the body.

Support groups and group therapy

Support groups provide a sense of belonging and understanding.

- Peer Support: Women share experiences in a safe space, reducing isolation.
- Skill-Building Workshops: Focused on emotional healing, rebuilding confidence, and setting boundaries.
- Mentorship and Role Models: Connecting survivors with women who have successfully healed.

Strength-based counseling

This method highlights the survivor’s strengths rather than focusing only on trauma.

- Resilience Recognition: Helping her see how strong she has been through hardships.
- Rebuilding Self-Esteem: Focusing on achievements and abilities beyond the trauma.
- Future-Oriented Goals: Setting achievable personal and professional milestones.

Assertiveness and empowerment training

Many survivors struggle with setting boundaries and speaking up. This training includes:

- Teaching Women to Say "No": Without guilt or fear.
- Recognizing Red Flags: Helping them identify future abusive behavior in relationships or workplaces.
- Self-Defense and Safety Strategies: Basic training in personal security and emotional safety.

Art and expressive therapy

For survivors who struggle to verbalize their pain, art therapy provides a non-verbal outlet.

- Painting/Drawing: Expresses emotions visually.



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- Writing Therapy: Journaling or poetry to process emotions.
 - Music and Dance Therapy: Movement-based healing techniques.

Family and social support counseling

Family members sometimes need guidance on how to support a survivor.

- Educating Families: Teaching them about trauma responses and emotional triggers.
- Rebuilding Trust: Addressing conflicts or trust issues with family members.
- Community Integration: Helping survivors reconnect with supportive social networks.

Crisis intervention and safety planning

If a woman is still in danger, emergency intervention is required.

- Developing an Escape Plan: If she lives with an abuser, planning a safe exit strategy.
- Connecting to Legal Aid: Guiding her on protective orders, legal actions, and shelters.
- Emergency Contacts: Providing numbers of crisis hotlines and safe houses.

Holistic healing approaches

Incorporating physical and emotional well-being can accelerate recovery.

- Yoga and Body Movement: Helps release stored trauma.
- Healthy Nutrition: Emotional healing through balanced eating.
- Sleep Hygiene: Improving sleep for better mental health.

Discussion

The results indicate that a multifaceted approach to psychological counseling yields the best outcomes for survivors of violence. While CBT is effective in addressing cognitive distortions, empowerment-based interventions help women regain control over their lives. Group therapy creates a supportive community, reducing isolation and fostering healing. However, challenges remain, including social stigma, lack of access to professional mental health services, and resistance to seeking help due to fear or shame. Addressing these challenges requires policy changes, awareness campaigns, and increased funding for mental health programs.

Conclusion

Psychological counseling plays a crucial role in helping women recover from the trauma of violence. A combination of cognitive-behavioral therapy, trauma-focused interventions, empowerment-based counseling, and group therapy provides the most effective support. To enhance the effectiveness of counseling services, the following measures are recommended:

- Expanding access to professional psychological counseling services for survivors of violence.
- Increasing awareness about the importance of mental health support for women who have experienced trauma.
- Training counselors in trauma-informed care to provide specialized support.
- Encouraging community-based support groups to reduce stigma and promote healing.

By implementing these strategies, society can better support women in overcoming the psychological consequences of violence and reclaiming their lives.



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