

ผลของการให้คำปรึกษากลุ่มที่เน้นความกลัวการประเมินทางสังคม ในเชิงลบ การสนับสนุนทางสังคม และบรรทัดฐานการใช้สารเสพติด ในกลุ่มผู้ใหญ่ที่มีความหลากหลายทางเพศในกรุงเทพมหานคร

The Effect of Group Counseling Intervention Focusing on Fear of Negative Social Evaluation, Social Support, and Substance Use Norms Among Sexual Minority Adults in Bangkok

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บทคัดย่อ

วิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อทดสอบผลของการให้คำปรึกษากลุ่มที่เน้นความกลัวการประเมินทางสังคมในเชิงลบ การสนับสนุนทางสังคม และบรรทัดฐานการใช้สารเสพติดในกลุ่มผู้ใหญ่ที่มีความหลากหลายทางเพศในกรุงเทพมหานคร ผู้กลุ่มตัวอย่าง 16 คน แบ่งเป็นกลุ่มทดลองและควบคุมกลุ่มละ 8 คน โดยส่งต่อจากผู้เข้าร่วมคนอื่น กลุ่มทดลองได้รับคำปรึกษากลุ่ม 60 นาที 8 ครั้ง รวม 8 อาทิตย์ และจดจำคำในหนึ่งวันสำหรับกลุ่มควบคุม โดยทำแบบสอบถามความกลัวการประเมินทางสังคมในเชิงลบ การสนับสนุนทางสังคม และบรรทัดฐานการใช้สารเสพติด ใช้การวิเคราะห์ความแปรปรวนแบบวัดซ้ำ พบว่ากลุ่มทดลองมีความกลัวการประเมินทางสังคมในเชิงลบและบรรทัดฐานการใช้สารเสพติดลดลงแต่การสนับสนุนทางสังคมเพิ่มขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ส่วนการสนับสนุนจากครอบครัวและบรรทัดฐานการใช้สารเสพติดเป็นประจำไม่เปลี่ยนแปลงอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ผลวิจัยสรุปว่าการให้คำปรึกษากลุ่มสามารถลดความกลัวการประเมินทางสังคมในเชิงลบ บรรทัดฐานการใช้สารเสพติด และเพิ่มการสนับสนุนทางสังคมในผู้ใหญ่ที่มีความหลากหลายทางเพศอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ผลวิจัยนี้สามารถใช้ส่งเสริมสุขภาพจิตและออกแบบนโยบายที่เหมาะสม ข้อเสนอแนะวิจัยครั้งต่อไปควรให้ความสำคัญกับรายบุคคล ปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างผู้ร่วมทดลอง หรือเลือกกลุ่มอัตลักษณ์ทางเพศที่เฉพาะเจาะจง

คำสำคัญ : ผู้ใหญ่ที่มีความหลากหลายทางเพศ, ความกลัวการประเมินทางสังคมในเชิงลบ, การสนับสนุนทางสังคม, บรรทัดฐานการใช้สารเสพติด

Abstract

This study examined the effects of group counseling intervention targeting fear of negative social evaluation, social support, and substance use norms among sexual minority adults in Bangkok. Sixteen participants, recruited via snowball sampling, were randomly assigned to an experimental group or control group (eight per group). The experimental group attended eight weekly 60-minute sessions, while the control group completed a one-day word memorization task. Using validated Thai-language instruments including BFNE-S,

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Substance Use Injunctive Norms Scale, Thai-MSPSS, pre- and post-intervention assessments were analyzed with Repeated Measures ANOVA. Results showed significant reductions in fear of negative evaluation and increases in friend and significant-other support, with no changes in family support. Substance use norms significantly decreased for total and occasional use but not regular use. Findings suggest group counseling is effective in improving mental health outcomes for sexual minorities. Recommendations include culturally sensitive interventions for counselors, nurses, and policymakers, with future research exploring individualized approaches and sexual minority identities.

Keywords: sexual minority adults, group counseling, social support, fear of negative social evaluation, substance use norms

Introduction

In Thai society, gender and sexuality significantly raise mental health risks due to sexual inequality and rigid roles¹. Health disparities between straight and LGB individuals stem from minority stress and factors like negative social evaluation, social support, and substance use norms². Fear of negative evaluation leads to avoidance behaviors based on past experiences^{3,4}, while research links these experiences to psychological distress in sexual minority adults⁵.

Addressing stigma through the crisis response system can protect vulnerable populations, including sexual minority adults, by managing grievances and advancing policies⁶. Enhancing health knowledge and social support networks fosters overall well-being and resilience⁷. Social support is crucial for sexual minority adults, with family and friends key for navigating challenges⁸. Research shows social support fosters positive outcomes and aids treatment adherence in mental health and substance issues^{9,10}. Substance use norms contribute to increased substance abuse among sexual minority adults, making them susceptible to societal pressures^{2,11}. Group counseling provides a safe environment for sharing and understanding common issues^{12,13}. However, there remains a significant gap in culturally tailored interventions that specifically address these challenges, particularly in strengthening social support

networks. This study seeks to evaluate group counseling interventions aimed at reducing fear of negative social evaluation, enhancing social support, and diminishing substance use norms, thereby contributing to a more robust framework for mental health support in this population.

Objective

The study aims to test the effect of group counselling intervention on fear of negative social evaluation, social support (includes subscales: social support from family, friends, and significant others) and substance use norms (includes subscales: occasional use and regular use) among sexual minority adults involving adults in Bangkok, Thailand.

Hypothesis

The group counseling intervention is effective in changing the level of fear of negative social evaluation, social support, and substance use norms among sexual minority adults in Bangkok, Thailand.

Methodology

This study employed a group counseling intervention to address fear of negative evaluation, social support, and substance use norms, grounded in a literature review. The framework, adapted from prior research, was modified for sexual minority adults,

as the original model was adolescent-focused². Structural equation modeling in a separate study confirmed that these three variables act as mediators. Participants completed a pretest with informed consent and confidentiality ensured. The control group performed a one-day word memorization task and was waitlisted for the posttest, while the experimental group attended eight weekly, 60-minute sessions based on Lamb's LGBT counseling model¹⁴. The first session introduced the group, leader, and members, established norms, discussed procedures, emphasized confidentiality, and conducted pre-assessments, along with goal-setting and an ice-breaker. The second session aimed to build relationships and explore sexuality using activities like the 'Gender Bread' exercise to foster comfort and acceptance. In the third session, members shared difficult experiences, promoting trust, understanding, and acceptance.

Subsequent sessions focused on coping strategies for challenges as fear of social evaluation, lack of support, and substance use norms. The fourth and fifth sessions introduced techniques for these issues, with the fifth session building on earlier strategies. In the sixth session, members practiced these strategies and learned from others' perspectives. The seventh session encouraged new attitudes toward family and social support, inspired by a video on a single mother raising a transman child. The final session provided closure, consolidating growth, sharing reflections, and conducting post-assessments.

Population

The population consisted of individuals whose gender identity does not align with their assigned gender at birth, aged between 18 and 60 years.

Sample Size

The sample included sixteen participants, split into an experimental and a control group of eight each. This size aligns with recommended group counseling guidelines, as groups of eight encourage effective interaction and a sense of belonging¹⁵.

Sampling Procedure

The study utilized snowball sampling methods as the sampling procedures. The head of the sexual minority community played a pivotal role in facilitating participant recruitment by encouraging individuals who were willing to engage in the study.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical approval was granted by the AU Institutional Review Board on January 24, 2023 (Certification No. 18/2022). Participants provided informed consent and were assured of confidentiality before enrolling. Data access was limited to the researcher, and responses were anonymous.

Research Tools and Instrument Quality

The study employs a two-part instrument structure, encompassing both a questionnaire assessment and an intervention component.

The questionnaire assessment is divided into four sections. The first section comprises screening questions designed to verify that respondents fit the target demographic, focusing on birth gender, sexual identity, and age. Respondents matching the specified criteria (not same birth gender and sexual identity) or outside the 18-60 age range were excluded from further analysis.

The second section assesses fear of negative social evaluation using eight questions rated on a five-point Likert scale. This section is based on the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE-S)¹⁶, which demonstrated high reliability (internal

consistency of 0.97)¹⁷ and validity, as confirmed by Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.985.

The third section evaluates social support with twelve questions across three subscales: significant others, family, and friends, using a seven-point Likert scale. This section was based on the Thai Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Thai-MSPSS)¹⁸, showing strong reliability an intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) of 0.84¹⁹, as confirmed by EFA and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.968.

The fifth section measures substance use norms with fourteen questions on a five-point Likert scale, adapted from the Substance Use Injunctive Norms scale, which demonstrated good reliability (0.90 and 0.91 in separate studies)²⁰ and validity, supported by EFA revealing two factors: occasional use and regular use, and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95.

To ensure the accuracy and cultural relevance of the translated instruments, the study followed the World Health Organization's four-step translation guidelines, including forward translation by a native expert, expert panel review and back-translation, pretesting with cognitive interviews, and final revisions based on feedback²¹. All instruments were also tested the validity and reliability using EFA, CFA and Cronbach's alpha in the separate study.

For the intervention sessions, various techniques were utilized, including The Gender Bread V4.0²², Imaginary Safe Place²³, Flipping Coin¹⁴, Vicious Cogs²⁴, and mindfulness practices to effectively support participants.

The pretest was administered to all participants prior to the initiation of the intervention. Following the completion of all intervention sessions, or at the eighth session, a posttest was conducted. Control group participants were then placed on a waiting list to receive the intervention following the posttest.

Data Collection

Data collection included pre- and post-intervention assessments using validated Thai-language questionnaires, with reliability confirmed through Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Cronbach's alpha from a separate study involving 450 samples. The data were processed and analyzed using statistical software, specifically employing Repeated Measures ANOVA (Analysis of Variance).

Data Analysis

The study employed Repeated Measures ANOVA to test the research hypotheses. This statistical method is effective for examining within-subject changes across different conditions, enhancing the analysis's power by controlling for individual variability²⁵. By measuring the same subjects under multiple conditions, the study assessed the effects of the group counseling intervention on fear of negative evaluation, social support, and substance use norms. The use of Repeated Measures ANOVA facilitated a comprehensive analysis of the intervention's impact over time, ensuring robust and reliable results.

Results

Table1 Summary Repeated measure ANOVA for Variables (n=16)

Variables	Different Mean		F	df	p-value
	Pre-Post Con.Group	Exp.group Pre-Post	Time x Group		
Fear of Negative Social Evaluation	-0.015	-1.421*	28.532	1	0.000
Social Support	-0.040	0.294*	28.532	1	0.000
- Friends	-0.063	0.594*	13.136	1	0.003
- Family	-0.029	-0.030	0.000	1	1.000
- Significant others	-0.031	0.312*	12.642	1	0.003
Substance Use Norms	-0.018	-0.506*	5.407	1	0.036
- Occasional use	-0.019	-0.606*	6.702	1	0.021
- Regular use	-0.050	-0.410	3.655	1	0.077

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The study revealed a statistically significant reduction in fear of negative social evaluation among the experimental group. This group showed a notable decrease in fear from pretest to posttest, with a mean difference of -1.421*, $p = 0.000$. In contrast, the control group showed no significant changes in fear of negative social evaluation at the posttest ($p > 0.05$). Regarding social support, the experimental group experienced a significant increase in social support from in overall, significant others and friends compared to the control group at the posttest. Additionally, the experimental group showed a significant increase in support between pretest and posttest from overall (mean difference = 0.294*, $p < 0.01$) significant others (mean difference = 0.312*, $p < 0.01$) and from friends (mean difference = 0.594*, $p < 0.01$). However, no significant differences were observed in family support ($p > 0.05$) as the control group ($p > 0.05$).

In terms of substance use norms, the experimental group showed a significant reduction in overall substance use norms from pretest to posttest (mean difference = -0.506*, $p < 0.05$). The group also

experienced a significant decrease in occasional substance use norms (mean difference = -0.606*, $p < 0.05$) from pretest to posttest. However, there were no significant differences in regular substance use norms ($p > 0.05$) and control group ($p > 0.05$).

Discussion

The group counseling intervention was significantly effective in reducing fear of negative social evaluation, enhancing social support, and decreasing substance use norms in experimental group among sexual minority adults in Bangkok. However, there were no significant differences in family support or regular substance use norms in this intervention.

The intervention effectively reduced fear of negative social evaluation in the experimental group, particularly through sessions focused on emotional expression, cognitive reappraisal, and fostering hope. Techniques such as affect labeling and creating a safe space helped participants manage their fear, while cognitive reappraisal and hope-building strategies promoted better emotional regulation and

coping²⁶⁻²⁹. Understanding and expressing emotions, along with fostering hope, can effectively reduce anxiety and fear³⁰.

Regarding social support, the intervention enhanced support from significant others and friends for the experimental group. By facilitating new friendships and increasing group cohesion, participants reported higher levels of social support¹¹. However, family support did not show significant improvement, possibly due to a lack of relatability in the provided video clips. In terms of substance use norms, the intervention successfully shifted norms toward less substance use and provided alternative coping strategies³¹. The group dynamics and shared attitudes within the experimental group contributed to these changes, highlighting the role of collective behavior norms in influencing individual attitudes toward substance use¹⁵.

Recommendations from Research Findings

The implications of this research underscore the importance of addressing fear of negative social evaluation, social support, and substance use norms to enhance the psychological well-being of sexual minority clients. Counselors can achieve significant progresses by integrating targeted, evidence-based approaches into the practice, focusing on these key areas. The effect of the group counseling intervention in reducing fear and enhancing social support highlights the value of these interventions in promoting mental health.

For nurses, particularly those in mental health or community settings, these findings are crucial. By understanding the role of fear of negative social evaluation, social support, and substance use norms, nurses can offer more holistic and culturally sensitive care to sexual minority individuals. Additionally, they can advocate for or participate in the development of group counseling programs that

address these specific challenges, further contributing to the overall well-being of their clients.

For educators, NGOs, and policymakers. Educators can use these insights to create supportive environments that help sexual minority students address issues like fear of negative social evaluation and social support, potentially mitigating the impact of these stressors on their mental health. NGOs can implement group counseling programs tailored to the unique needs of sexual minority community, focusing on reducing fear of negative social evaluation, enhancing social support, and addressing substance use norms. For policymakers, the study highlights the effect of targeted interventions in improving the psychological well-being of sexual minority adults, underscoring the need for inclusive policies that promote acceptance and support within families and communities.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are six key recommendations for future research on this research. First, future studies should aim to strengthen relationships among participants to foster a greater sense of safety, trust, and support within the group. Building a more collaborative environment could enhance discussions, personal sharing, and feedback, thereby improving the overall effect of the intervention. Second, while the current study utilized group activities, future research could benefit from incorporating individualized approaches to address participants' unique needs more effectively. Tailoring techniques to individual issues may lead to more personalized and impactful outcomes.

Third, the use of video clips in session 7, which featured content about a transman, may not have resonated with all participants, leading to limited effects on family support. Future research should use multimedia content that is more relevant

and relatable to the participants' experiences to strengthen engagement and effect. Fourth, incorporating communication skills training could empower sexual minority adults to better engage with their families, potentially increasing perceived family support. Fifth, dedicating more time to discussing and differentiating substance use norms, especially between occasional and regular use, could lead to clearer distinctions and more significant changes in substance use behaviors. Finally, focusing on specific aspects of sexual minority identities could provide more targeted insights and interventions for this population.

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