

## **Efficacy of Child-Oriented Unified Trans-Diagnostic Treatment for Alexithymia in Divorce-Engaged Children with Emotional Self-Regulation Difficulties**

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### **Extended Abstract**

#### **Aim**

Due to divorce, the absence of each parent from the family environment disrupts its equilibrium, diminishes its functioning, and reduces social supervision and control. In children and adolescents, addiction increases delinquency, physical difficulties, and mental and social disorders. Social, emotional, identity, and social obstacles impede the integration of divorced children into society. Emotional disorganization is one of the problems that arise in children as a result of divorce and the mental alterations it causes. Difficulty in emotional regulation is associated with a variety of disorders and physiological symptoms, including pain, smoking, food disorders, and addiction. In addition, a number of studies have demonstrated that emotional dysregulation is associated with a wide range of disorders, including substance abuse, generalized anxiety disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. This study investigated the efficacy of child-oriented Unified Trans-Diagnostic Treatment for Alexithymia in divorce-engaged children with emotional self-regulation difficulties.

#### **Methodology**

The study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test, post-test, and two-month follow-up period. The statistical population of the present study included female divorced children (9 to 12 years old) with difficulty in emotional self-regulation who attended primary school in Tehran during the academic year 2021-22. 26 female children of divorced parents with difficulties in emotional self-regulation were selected using a purposive sampling method and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups of 13 children each. The experimental group received ten sixty-five-minute sessions of unified trans-diagnostic treatment intervention geared toward children over the course of two months. In this study, the Children's Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) and Alexithymia Questionnaire (AQ) were applied as questionnaires. The data were analyzed using SPSS-23 and the mixed ANOVA method.

#### **Findings**

The findings revealed that the child-oriented Unified Trans-Diagnostic Treatment has a significant effect on Alexithymia and emotional self-regulation in divorce-engaged children with difficulties in emotional self-regulation ( $p < 0.001$ ). In this way, child-oriented Unified Trans-Diagnostic Treatment was able to reduce the average scores of Alexithymia and emotional self-regulation in children of divorce who struggle with emotional self-regulation. During the phase of follow-up, these results remained stable.

#### **Conclusion**

Identifying emotions, teaching emotional awareness, cognitive reevaluation, identifying emotion avoidance models, and investigating behaviors resulting from emotions were found to be effective in decreasing alexithymia in divorce-engaged children with difficulty in emotional self-regulation.

**Keywords:** Alexithymia, Child-Oriented Unified Trans-Diagnostic Treatment, Difficulty in Emotional Self-Regulation, Divorce-Engaged Children.