

Effectiveness of Healthy Emotional Expression among Girls and Boys Experiencing Anxiety and Suicide Ideation

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Abstract

As we know both genders are different and so are their needs, challenges and phases of lives. Exposure to both the gender is more or less the same these days as parents want both their kids to live a similar life. But with more freedom and liberty comes more sense of responsibility, which is missing in the current generation. They demand great deal of freedom but do not understand how to utilise it. Teenagers are very fragile and easily influenced by people around them. Harming oneself and trying to end their lives have become a status symbol for them. It was found that among 13-15 years of age anxiety scores girls tend to display more anxiety and also greater improvement after the intervention. In 16-18 years of age group anxiety was found to be high among girls. Whereas the prevalence of suicide ideation was found to be more among the boys in both the age range of 13-15 years and 16-18 years than the girls.

Keywords: Anxiety, Girls, Harming oneself, Intervention and Suicide Ideation.

Introduction

WHO stated by 2020 there will be large amount of population who will die due to committing suicide and the estimation is about 1.53 million people.⁶ We live in a time where challenges are evolving in everyday basis. Things are unpredictable and so are the thought processes. According to Gross 1998,1999, Emotional expression is the verbal and non-verbal way of conveying one's emotional experience.⁷ Whereas Elliotts & Jacob, 2013 stated that expression is a process wherein an individual expresses their ideas, thoughts and feelings in any format i.e. speech, writing or in any other way.⁸

Anxiety: According to E. David Leonardo & Rene Hen (2008) anxiety is a state where the organism prepares himself/herself to create a response against potential threats.⁹

Browne (2018) said anxiety is a feeling of uneasiness, worry, tension about the things whose results are uncertain. There are multiple symptoms of anxiety through which one can understand that if an individual is experiencing anxiety for example, heart palpitation, restlessness, muscle tension etc.¹⁰

Symptoms of Anxiety: According to APA some

common complaints shared by people who experience anxiety are difficulty in sleeping, lack of concentration, palpitations, shortness of breath etc.¹¹

Types of Anxiety Disorders: Generalised Anxiety Disorder - Individuals with GAD are always in the hunt of danger in the space and are very observant. People are unable to control their preparedness and observe even the minutest activity very carefully. Generalized anxiety disorder is "characterized by chronic excessive worry accompanied by three or more of the following symptoms: restlessness, fatigue, concentration problems, muscle tension and sleep disturbance".¹²

Phobias: National Institute of Mental Health Worldwide stated there is about 5-12% of people experience phobic disorders. Phobias are based on irrelevant belief of an individual's'.¹³

Types of phobias are:

- Specific Phobia
- Social Phobia
- Agoraphobia

Panic Disorder: Taylor explained Panic disorder as an abrupt surge of intense attack rising to a peak when

thoughts of particular stumble are present. Here the person experiences attack of intense terror which results in physical symptoms such as feeling uncomfortable, feels like urinating, difficulty in breathing or sweating (C Barr Taylor 2006).¹⁴

Post: Traumatic Stress Disorder -Caroline Vaile Wright, Linda L. Collinsworth, Louise F. Fitzgerald in 2009 explained that Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder is a result of distressing experiences in an individuals' lives.¹⁵ According to DSM-V some of the common symptoms include over attentiveness, indulging in past, can't focus on current activities, anger and depression.¹⁶

Separation Anxiety Disorder: It is mostly found among children. Usually when they stay apart from their parents Separation Anxiety Disorder is experienced (G Masi, M Mucci, S Millepiedi - CNS drugs, 2001).¹⁷ It is considered as disorder as the level of anxiety among the children is excessive and inappropriate.

Suicide: According to ED Klonsky, AM May, By Saffwe 2016, found out that one of the dominant reason for deaths are 'Suicide'.¹⁸ It is a process of taking one's own life and is an important reason of death worlds wide. In 2008 Matthew K. Nock, Evelyn J. Bromet, Christine B. Cha, Ronald C. Kessler, Sing Lee & Guilherme Borges understood that this low phase of life also involves a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness.¹⁹

Suicide Ideation: It was understood most of the people who displays suicidal thought do not end up indulging in the act of ending their lives. (Alexis M. May, E. David Klonsky, 2016).²⁰ According to Nock, M. K., & Favazza, A. R. (2009) it is a deliberate effort to destroy one's body tissues.²¹ Inability to deal with one's life circumstances create a cycle of negative thoughts and the person end up ending their lives in the process. According to M. David Rudd, 1989, problem of youth suicide is a great concern.²²

Healthy Emotional Expression: Facing challenges and obstacles in life journey is natural and common across all human existence but how we manage the state of mind in those dire circumstances decides the mental health of an individual. Edward J. Murray Daniel L. Segal, 1994 has stated that by practicing relaxations method like, yoga, meditation etc, last but not the least by letting those disturbing emotions go and by not pondering upon them again and again and it is recommended that one shall strive for healthy means of expressing emotions.²³

In 2014, Davide Margola, Sara Molgora, Tracey A. Revenson did a research to identify which is a more effective mode of written expression. Benefit-Focused or Standard Expressive Writing on Adolescents' Self-Concept. Two groups were made to identify the potential benefits of the two method and it was found out that in the initial 5 years more than 200 students reported in favour of Benefit Focused writing method.²⁴

Carmen P. McLean, Anu Asnaani Brett T. Litz Stefan G. Hofmann in 2011 discovered on two parameters i:e Anxiety and Social Anxiety. These two genders of 20,013 samples size were tested for almost a year long time to come on any conclusion. It was concluded that women are more prone to report anxiety where as no gender difference were found to be effective when it comes to social anxiety.²⁵

Caroline Smith, Heather Hancock, Jane Blake-Mortimer Kerena Eckert (2007) did random trial with yoga and relaxation to identify which method is more effective in terms of giving relief from Stress and Anxiety. This process was repeated for over 10 weeks and researchers came down to the conclusion that both method are equally effective in terms of giving relief to people with high stress and anxiety.²⁶

Sheese, B. E., Brown, E. L., & Graziano, W. G. (2004) found the impact of expressing emotions via e-mails. 546 participants were selected for the same and were randomly categorised into long and short term traumatic writing. it entire process was repeated for 5 weeks. By the end of 5 weeks it was found out that participants reported positive physical and mental health.²⁷

Stacey H. Kovac PhD, Lillian M. Range (2002) found the relevance of expressive writing and repeated the process of expressing emotions using pen and paper for 20 minutes for 4 days. It was found out that there was a reduction in the suicidal thoughts of people when they got the outlet of negative emotions.²⁸

Lewnisohn, P.M., Goltib, I.H., Lewinsohn, Seeley, Allen in 1998 tried to identify the impact of gender on experiencing anxiety and it was found out that female undergo the impact of Anxiety more than men.²⁴

Material and Method

Study population, sample size and data: The study started diagnosing 400 children with suicide

ideations and anxiety of various severity levels, part of Delhi/NCR schools, due to the exclusion criteria 340 students were dropped. The study at the end consist of 60 participants classified as Early and Late adolescents, of which 30 were females, consist of 50% of sample and remaining 30 boys were 50%.

Independent samples t-test - allows us to compare two groups of observations, all of which have come from the different group of people but possibly with a different mean for each condition. One has two experimental conditions and has used different participants in each condition. Systematic improvements in the parameters are noticed with corresponding magnitude of such effect in the population of interest. Further to support the significance of such comparisons, effect size is duly reported for every experimental phase evaluation using r (Rosenthal, 1991; Rosnow & Rosenthal, 2005), Cohen's d. Mean differences are evaluated using p-value, t statistics, error bar graph, all the comparisons denoted by $p < .01/.05$ or *** are highly significant at both the levels of significance 1%. and 5%.

Intervention Plan: For 3 and a ½ months students with anxiety and suicidal ideation issues were called for 1 hour for one to one interpersonal therapy sessions (30 adolescents for each group – 13-15 year and 16-18 year). The intervention focused on enhancing social support and decreasing interpersonal stress by attacking anxiety and improving interpersonal skills.

The plan is for the student to become more aware of his or her ability to deal with interpersonal problems that have kept him or her from being able to actively manage the symptoms of anxiety and suicide ideation. Three method were used to unburden the emotions, they are as follows:

- a. Relaxation Therapy
- b. Written Expression
- c. Verbal Expression

Tools:

- 1. State – Trait Anxiety Test by Sanjay Vohra
- 2. Suicidal Ideation Scale by S. Sisodia & V. Bhatnagar

Result

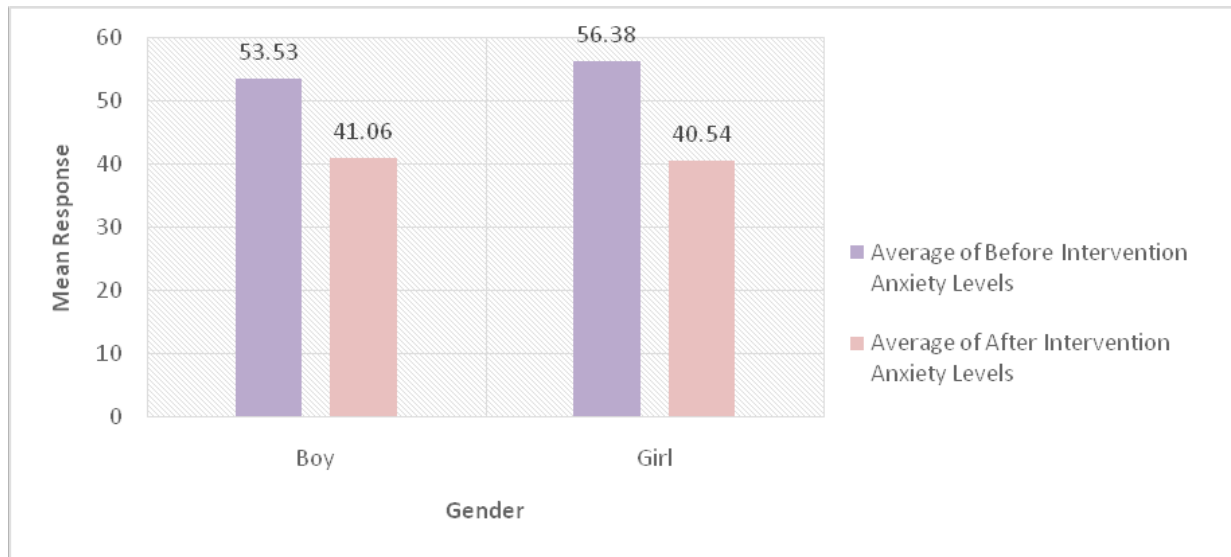


Figure 1: Depicting mean response of anxiety scores for boys and girls before and after intervention, observed in the sample of 13-15 years of school

Figure 1 displays the pre and post intervention anxiety scores of boys and girls for 13-15 years of age group. Pre – intervention score for boys was 53.53

whereas the post intervention score was 41.06. For girls the pre intervention and post intervention score was 56.38 and 40.54 respectively.

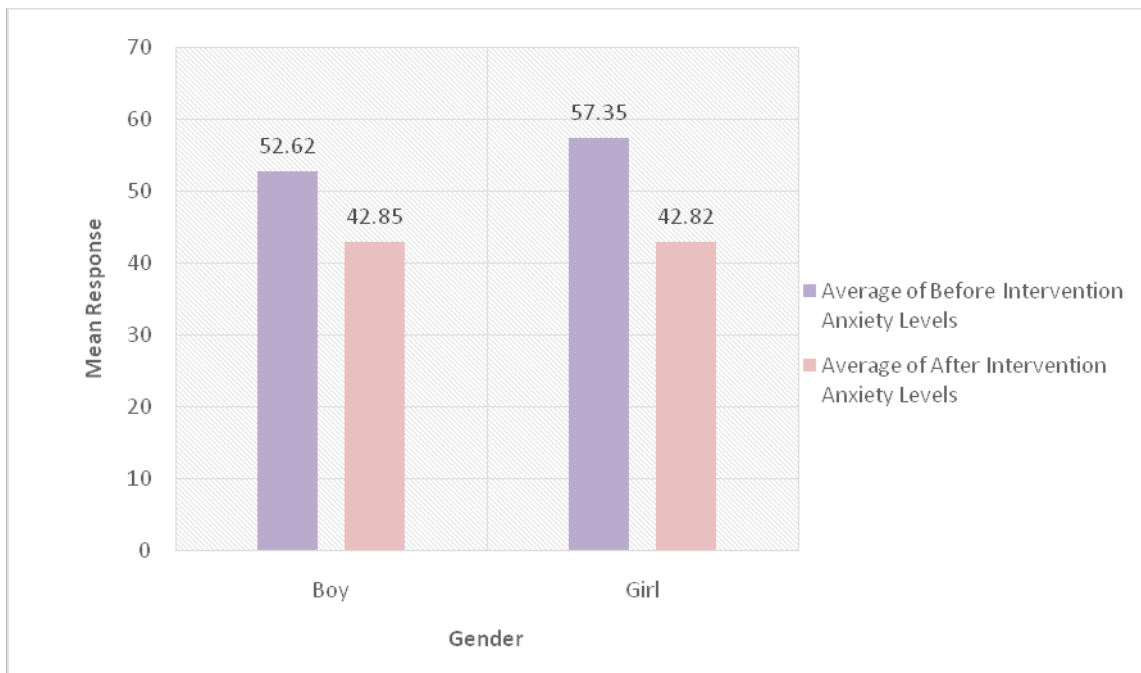


Figure 2: Depicting mean response of Anxiety scores for boys and girls pre and post intervention, observed sample of 16-18 years of school students.

Figure 2 indicates Anxiety scores of boys and girls of 16- 18 years age group. It was found that before intervention boys got the score of 52.62 whereas girls

obtained 57.35. After intervention boys scores came out to be 42.85 and girls displayed major improvement and scores 42.82.

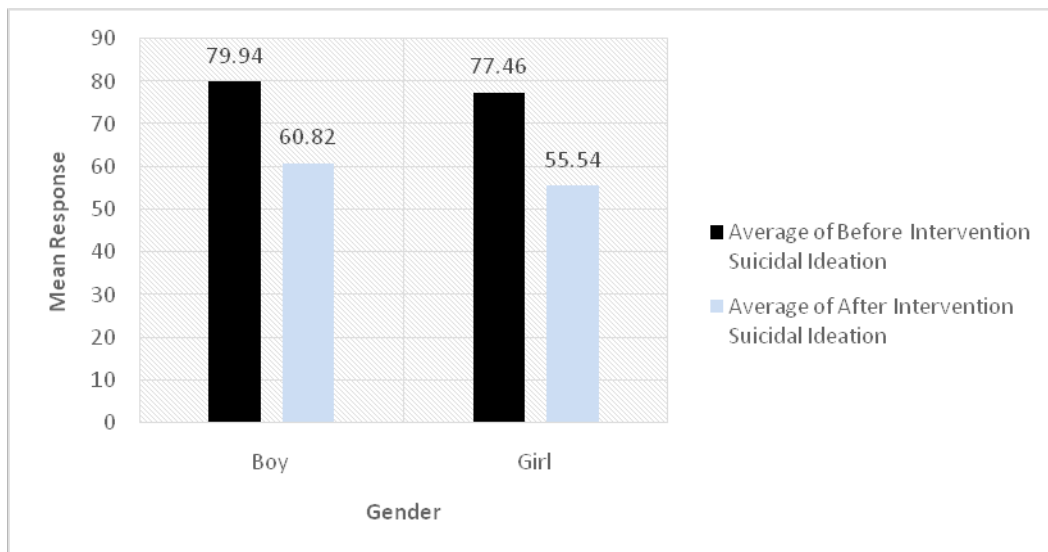


Figure 3: Depicting mean response of S.I scores for boys and girls before and after intervention, observed sample of 13-15 years of student.

Figure- 3 displays the pre and post intervention S.I scores of boys and girls for 13-15 years of age group. Pre – intervention score for boys was 79.94 whereas

the post intervention score was 60.82. For girls the pre intervention and post intervention score was 77.46 and 55.54 respectively.

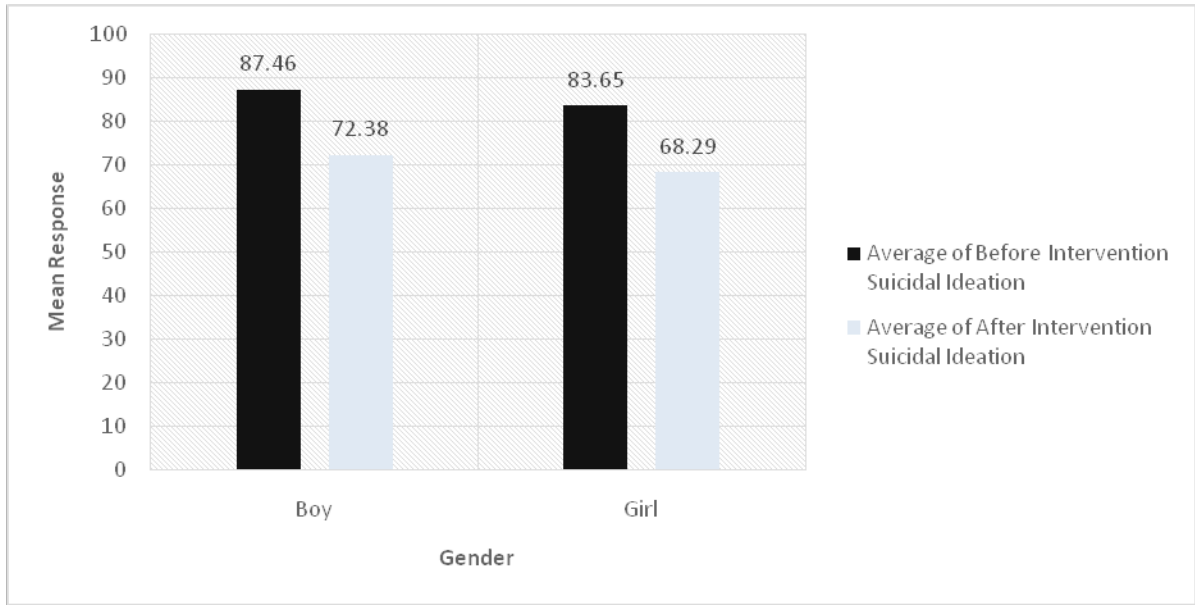


Figure 4: Depicting mean response of Suicide Ideation scores for boys and girls before and after intervention, observed sample of 16-18 years of school students

Figure – 4 indicates S.I scores of boys and girls of 16- 8 years age group. It was found that before intervention boys got the score of 87.46 whereas girls obtained 83.65. After intervention boys scores came out to be 72.38 and girls displayed major improvement and secures 68.29.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the current research work is to establish if three techniques i:e relaxation therapy, written expression and verbal expression are used together for the duration of 3 month would it lead to different impact on anxiety and suicide ideation scores on boys and girls in 13-15 and 16-18 years of age groups. To understand the impact of work students with Anxiety and Suicide Ideations were identified to initiate the research work. It was a great task to collect the consent of the parents to work on such a sensitive issue and also to control the withdrawal rates during the process.

Results indicates that in the age range of 13-15 years Anxiety scores for girls are found to be 56.38 (pre – intervention) and 40.54 (post – intervention) whereas boys secured the score of 53.53 (pre- intervention) and 41.06 (post- intervention). It was found girls displayed high tendency of anxiety and also a marked improvement in the state after the therapy was provided. The anxiety scores of boys and girls of 16- 18 years age group was found out to be 52.62 for boys before intervention,

whereas girls obtained 57.35. After intervention boys scores came out to be 42.85 and girls displayed major improvement and secures 42.82. In 13-15 years of age group suicide ideation pre – intervention score for boys was 79.94 whereas the post intervention score was 60.82. For girls the pre intervention and post intervention score was 60.82 and 55.54 respectively. Suicide ideation scores of boys and girls of 16- 18 years was found to be 87.46 before intervention, whereas girls obtained 83.65. After intervention boys scores came out to be 72.38 and girls displayed major improvement and secures 68.29. Previous studies states the fact that during the developmental years of children conduct behavior leads to some amount of impulsivity in them.

Haravuori et al., 2017; Ranta et al., 2018 examined underpins exhibit based, organized mediations focusing on emotional wellness issue. It is perceived a developing acknowledgment of the requirement for early interventions. It can be concluded that both the gender experiences the impact of social world but they vary due to individual differences.³⁰ Girls seems to be more effected with anxiety issues, on the contrary boys have reported greater tendency for suicide ideation.

³¹Karyn E. Schweiker-Marra, William T. Marra (2010) Studies have proved the fact that pre writing the post writing of the anxiety and it has been found out that there is the marked change in writing expression

and students reported less Anxiety issues.³² Stacey H. Kovac, Lillian M. Range in 2002 observed resistant in suicidal thoughts when participants jotted down the feelings.³³

It can clearly be concluded that the therapy is found to be effective in both the genders though the amount in which each gender experience it is different and so is the impact of the therapy.

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Ethical Clearance: This study was entirely done for the benefit of the children. Prior consent was taken from the parents as well as from the schools to conduct the research procedure.

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