



The Effect of Group Training in Positive Thinking Skills on Psychological Security and Self-Worth of Adolescent Girls

Rahmatollah Azimi^{1*}, and Khadige Sisyan¹

¹Child and Adolescent Therapist, Iranian Psychological System Organization No. 2180, Tehran. Iran.

²Master of Science in Clinical Psychology, Tehran, Iran.

Article Information

Received: November 05, 2025

Accepted: November 20, 2025

Published: December 01, 2025

***Corresponding author:** Rahmatollah Azimi, Child and Adolescent Therapist, Iranian Psychological System Organization No. 2180, Tehran. Iran.

Citation: Azimi R, and Sisyan K, (2025) "The Effect of Group Training in Positive Thinking Skills on Psychological Security and Self-Worth of Adolescent Girls" Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2(3); DOI: 10.61148/3065-6990/JSBS/048.

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Abstract:

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of group training in positive thinking skills on the psychological security and self-esteem of adolescent girls. The statistical population of this study included all adolescent girls aged 14 to 18 in Tehran who referred to counseling centers in 2024. This study was conducted in the form of a quasi-experimental study with a control group and within the framework of a pre-test and post-test design for two experimental and control groups. Out of 32 participants in this study, 16 participants in the experimental group and 16 participants in the control group were evaluated before and after training with research tools such as Maslow's Psychological Security Scale (1952) and Crocker et al.'s Self-worth Questionnaire (2003). The group training intervention in positive thinking skills was carried out during an eight-session program of 90 minutes. The research data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The results of multivariate analysis of covariance showed that group training in life skills (problem solving and effective communication skills) had a significant effect on at least one of the variables of conflict with parents and aggression ($P < 0.01$, $F = 1522/878$), and the results of univariate analysis of covariance showed that group training in positive thinking skills had a significant effect on psychological security ($P < 0.01$, $F = 2318/161$) and Self-worth ($P < 0.01$, $F = 1208/151$) in adolescent girls at the post-test stage. Therefore, it can be concluded that in this study, group training in positive thinking skills has been able to cause psychological security and Self-worth in adolescent girls aged 14 to 18 in Tehran.

Keywords: Psychological security, Self-worth, positive thinking skills, Seligman, Crocker

Introduction

Adolescents live in a period of transition from childhood to adolescence, and during this period they discover an amazing identity, such as learning skills and personality changes. They also face great challenges on the way to reaching adolescence. Adolescents are different from children and young people in general. Psychologists have called adolescence a period of emotionalism, emotionalism, constructive crises, and a period of pressure and storm (Eskandari-Pilehroud, Najafianpour, and Nejad-Mohammadnameghi, 2019). Adolescence is the most important developmental period, and the most sensitive and critical period of human development; adolescents face many challenges due to rapid physical,

social, emotional, and cognitive changes. During this period, the individual reaches maturity and seeks identity and independence. Due to these important changes and events during this period, adolescents do not have a stable mental state; it is during this period that most behavioral problems usually arise for adolescents. Adolescent behavioral and emotional problems on the one hand and environmental pressures (parents, school, etc.) on the other hand lead to problems in their mental health in various areas (Saeipour Ghasemi, 2019). Adolescents seek a unique identity during this period. In early to late adolescence, their way of thinking is influenced by the rules of self-centeredness, which decrease with maturity and over time. Three characteristics of adolescent self-centeredness include 1- Self-absorption. This means that their focus is primarily on themselves. 2- Personal anecdotes and stories. This means that they see themselves as special and unique. 3- Imaginary audience. They feel that others are focused on them and see nothing else except their words and actions, and all their attention is on them (Wang, 2019). If the emotional context and psychological support of family and society (such as schools) are available, adolescents will have greater development. In contrast, due to severe mood swings and high emotional sensitivities, adolescents may become isolated, depressed, and frustrated due to lack of emotional and social support, and may lose so much self-confidence that they may even consider suicide (Taylor, 2016). In other words, adolescents' psychological security, including emotional and social security, may seem simple, but it must be said that feelings of insecurity create feelings of helplessness and inadequacy, and adolescents become doubtful in their decision-making and despair about their goals, so they cannot benefit from their potential talents (Sarikam, 2014). Psychological security, as one of the important aspects of mental health, plays a very important role in the lives of adolescents. Psychological security means maintaining the balance and mental health of an individual in the face of pressures, stresses, and life changes. Psychological security begins in the early stages of an individual's life. (Karmi and Mohammad Khani, 2018). From a psychological perspective, the first condition for ensuring the mental health of a child or adolescent is a sense of psychological security. The education and upbringing of a child or adolescent must take place in a safe environment, and without a sense of peace and security, all efforts and educational measures will be futile and ineffective. Therefore, all the efforts of responsible parents should be based on the principle that the home and family atmosphere is full of security and peace. Each member of your family, especially your child or children, should feel psychologically secure at home, feel a sense of dependence and belonging to the family, and consider the family center to be the best and safest place (Okrodudu, 2020). Close and conservative relationships with parents strengthen the adolescent's psychological security and help form secure bonds and internal trust. Meeting physiological needs, creating financial security, and meeting basic needs of individuals increases the feeling of psychological security. A stable and predictable living environment creates a sense of predictability and control over life and strengthens psychological security (Maldar, 2019). Traumatic events such as experiencing trauma, physical injuries, experiencing major failures, and losing loved ones significantly reduce the psychological security of adolescents (Slomowsky and Dunn, 2020). According to psychologists, self-worth is one of the characteristics that is considered very important

in acquiring identity during adolescence. Self-worth helps adolescents to better understand their own competences. Self-worth is a skill that should be strengthened in the age groups of children and adolescents. With this positive feeling, adolescents can develop their skills and abilities and have a better life. Self-esteem is one of the most important social issues and concerns related to this age group. Both children and adolescents are sensitive social groups and are in the early stages of physical and mental development, so if their mental abilities and individual skills are properly strengthened from the very early stages of education, it can be said that they will have a better life than others in the future (Bagir, Khantina, & Gill, 2020). Self-worth actually acts as a safe self-awareness system and creates the resistance, strength, and ability necessary for reconstruction, without which the individual's psychological development is impaired (Bahadori et al., 2016). Self-worth promotes the level of general health, self-regulation, reduces depression, improves social behavior, and the ability to face everyday life events and incidents, which manifests its effects at different levels of individual and social life (Croker et al., 2004). Cesatelli, Marianacci, and Nato (2010) showed that people with low self-worth are more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as substance use and bullying. Self-worth promotes social adaptation and reduces maladjustment and psychosocial harm in individuals. Self-worth is a mechanism for explaining and understanding the moral-social basis of individuals' social behavior (Lee and Mastillo, 2020). People with high self-worth experience better quality friendships, less social anxiety, and higher self-confidence (Adams, Taylor, Calogero, & Lee, 2017). Self-worth in adolescents is a very important and challenging category, and its importance is such that it affects the success or failure of an individual in their professional and social life in adulthood. If we want to introduce a definition of self-worth, we can actually introduce its synonyms, namely self-esteem. Self-worth, as this term suggests, means creating a sense of value in an individual; so that they are satisfied with everything they have. Self-esteem is a positive internal feeling that can be achieved both innately and acquired (Bagir et al., 2020). In general, adolescents who do not feel self-worth are people who have depression; cannot communicate with others; are always anxious, panicked, stressed, and worried; do not cope well with their daily activities; They are hopeless in any situation; they cannot express their emotions; they feel embarrassed and ashamed of expressing their feelings and words; and most importantly, these people resort to negative methods to relieve their negative states, including using drugs or tranquilizers (Zare et al., 2022). One of the effective factors in providing peace and psychological security is having positive thoughts because the mental and physical state and the way we experience happiness or pain, and in general the quality of our life, originate from our mental makeup and style of thinking. Most of the stress and misery in people's lives is negativity, and there has always been a fierce war between positive and negative thoughts. Research has shown that positive thoughts cause mental and physical well-being and increase people's lifespan. In this century, it is felt more than ever before that those who have positive thoughts enjoy greater mental health (Klinike, 2005). Positivity is one of the most important variables affecting psychological security and self-worth, especially in the social sphere, which results in a set of tendencies based on satisfaction, optimism, hope, and trust and confidence in the individual (Emadin Nejad, 2013).

Adolescents should be taught that their lifestyle is determined by their way of thinking. If their reaction is optimistic, enthusiastic, and confident, it creates a cycle of optimism that energizes and inspires them (Zarei et al., 2014). Being positive is a mental and emotional attitude that focuses more on good things and predicts results that will benefit your personal and social life. Based on positive thinking, it is necessary to expect happiness, health, and success from various events so that we can keep negative thoughts away from ourselves. Being positive creates a positive feedback loop in life, and the more you look at the events around you with a more positive perspective, the better things will happen. Of course, having positive thoughts does not mean giving up, but people who look at events and phenomena around them with this attitude do not easily accept defeat; because a positive attitude prevents negative thoughts from affecting their mood and mental state. Because being positive is one of the most important factors of peace in life (Jabri et al., 2013). Positive thinking training does not mean activities focused on negative aspects, treatment or pathology, but rather an emphasis on improving well-being and mental health through activities that lead to increased positive cognitive and behavioral effects (Kiamarsi et al., 2018). Positive thinking includes training in thinking differently about negative events and possessions and valuing possessions (Seligman and Sikrant-Mihali, 2014). There is now considerable evidence that these experiments have a positive effect on well-being, reducing symptoms of depression (Petrosky and Mikuta, 2012), improving self-confidence, increasing positive emotions, and reducing negative emotions (Garcia et al., 2013). Research by Ahmadpouri and Mottaghi, 2018, Pour-Razavi and Hafezian, 2017, Ellison et al., 2014, Eknell et al., 2015, Dehghan-Nejad et al., 2017 have confirmed the effect of positive thinking on mental health. Therefore, one of the healthy behavioral patterns in society is positive thinking, which can be different based on each person's attitude towards their future and prepare them for success and victory. Of course, it is better to know that being positive alone is not a requirement for progress, and this attitude in life can lead a person to success. Positive thinking is actually a type of mental attitude in which a person expects good and desirable results, and having positive thoughts will be the process of creating thoughts that turn mental energy into reality. (Seligman and Sikrant Mihaly, 2014). Adolescence, with all its ups and downs, is a time for the formation of more abstract intelligence if a deep emotional foundation is created in the family environment and the many changes of this season of life are accepted. The adolescent's power of understanding and reasoning increases and he deals with his philosophical perceptions in life. The adolescent is full of excitement; he wants to change his world. Changes in the teenager's physics and thoughts are accompanied by leaps and bounds. Most teenagers at this age start writing and write poetry, and strong emotions dominate them. All these changes, with better understanding from the family, society, and those around them, can become opportunities to achieve the teenager's talents. So that they determine his future life. He begins to explore himself. His/her understands his/her own existence and seeks to acquire his/her identity. An atmosphere of personal growth is created in terms of emotional, psychological, physical and selective aspects in the academic and professional fields, and this is where the role of family and social support and training in positive thinking skills is very necessary and essential. Therefore, considering that

adolescents are the hope of the future of the country and the fate of the country is determined in the hands of these adolescents, this research seeks to answer the question: **How can group training in positive thinking skills be effective in increasing the psychological security and Self-worth of teenage girls in Tehran?**

Method:

The present study was applied in terms of its purpose and in terms of the method of data collection and treatment plan, and was conducted in the form of a semi-experimental study with a control group and within the framework of a pre-test and post-test design for the two experimental and control groups. The statistical population of this study included all 14-18-year-old girls' adolescents in Tehran who referred to counseling centers in 2024. In this study, 32 female adolescents who were selected by convenient sampling method from residents of Tehran if they were willing to cooperate in this study were selected. Then, 32 girls' adolescents were randomly assigned to two experimental groups (16 people) and control groups (16 people), and the experimental group underwent a group training intervention on positive thinking skills during 8 sessions 90-minute, and the control group did not receive any intervention. Before the intervention, a pre-test was conducted and after the end of the intervention, a post-test was conducted on both groups.

Measurement tool:

a) Maslow's Psychological Security Questionnaire (1952): This questionnaire was designed and compiled by Maslow in 1952 to measure psychological security (security and insecurity). The Psychological Security Questionnaire (security and insecurity) has 71 questions and consists of ten factors (factor one: reality perception, adaptability, emotional security, social security, and success at work. Factor two: feelings of inferiority and rejection, family conflict, depression, dependency, personal insecurity, and emotional insecurity. Factor three: belief, self-confidence, self-assurance, sense of personal worth, success at work, and self-awareness. Factor four: tension, emotional tension, nervousness, and agitation. Factor five: feelings of inferiority, suspicion, and general fear. Factor six: adaptability, intimacy, acceptance, and connection with others. Factor seven: worry and fear of the future. Factor eight: feelings of esteem (for oneself, etc.) and feelings of safety. Factor nine: social interest, sympathy for people, and tendency to solve problems. Factor ten: feelings of Loneliness and rejection (isolation). The scoring of this questionnaire is based on a two-choice scale (0 and 1). To calculate the score of each subscale, add together the scores of each item related to that subscale. To calculate the total score of the questionnaire, add together the scores of all items of the questionnaire. The minimum and maximum scores of this questionnaire are 0 and 71. The higher the score obtained from this questionnaire, the greater the level of psychological security and vice versa. The validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by Sarmad et al. in 2011 and its reliability was reported as 0.70 through Cronbach's alpha (Sarmad et al.2021).

b) Crocker et al.'s Self-worth Questionnaire (2003): This scale has 35 seven-choice questions. The scoring of this questionnaire is based on a seven-point Likert scale, with options ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 7, with a score of 1 indicating the lowest level of Self-worth in the organization and a score of 7 indicating the highest level of Self-worth. The range of

scores for this questionnaire is between 35 and 245. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been calculated and approved by its creators using confirmatory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In Iran, Marzban et al. confirmed the validity and reliability of this questionnaire in 2013 and reported its Cronbach's alpha as 0.74.

Topics of group training sessions on positive thinking skills derived from the positive thinking protocol:

Session one: Introduction, conducting a pre-test and specifying the rules in the group, introducing the nature and goals of the program, familiarizing students with the concept of positive thinking and its impact on people's lives.

Session two: How to think about an event, how to deal with that event, identifying the signs and symptoms of positive thinking, and analyzing students' perspectives on life.

Session three: Familiarization and training in the skill of catching thoughts and expressing positive beliefs and self-talk and fighting negative thoughts for students, as well as a table for identifying the

situation, thought, relevant emotion, scoring emotion, reaction to emotion, and the final result for students.

Session four: Training in the skill of changing mental images and positive internal imagery, and presenting the relevant training table and images, and training in the use of language for students.

Session five: Training in evaluating attitudes and training in looking at fears positively and pushing them away, and confronting the beliefs surrounding that fear.

Session Six: Introducing students to the dimension of personalization, which is one of the thinking styles and was expressed by Seligman.

Session Seven: Debating and confronting catastrophic views (correct debate).

Session Eight: Familiarizing and practicing students with the comprehensive thinking style that Seligman has proposed and teaching the skill of creating optimism through optimistic thinking and acting on it and conducting a post-test.

Findings:

Table 1: Descriptive indicators for the control group in the two stages of pre-test-post-test (n1=n2=16)

Variable	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
psychological security	16	20	27	24.69	1.74
	16	30	33	26.44	1.96
Self-worth	16	85	99	88.37	3.48
	16	89	100	90.81	3.54

The information in Table (1) shows the mean and standard deviation of the psychological security and self-worth indices in the pre-test and post-test stages for the control group. As can be

seen, the difference in the indices between the scores in the pre-test and post-test stages is slight.

Table 2: Descriptive indicators for the experimental group in the two stages of pre-test-post-test (n1=n2=16)

Variable	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
psychological security	16	19	28	24.25	2.59
	16	52	63	58.12	1.66
Self-worth	16	87	98	91.94	3.58
	16	170	210	187.94	3.07

The information in Table (2) shows the mean and standard deviation of the psychological security and self-worth indices in the pre-test and post-test stages for the experimental group. As can

be seen, the difference in the indices between the scores in the pre-test and post-test stages is large.

Normality tests of variables:

Table 3: Kalamogrov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests to check the normality of the distribution of scores

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test			Shapiro-Wilk test		
	Statistics	df	P	Statistics	df	P
psychological security	0.252	32	0.125	0.817	32	0.184
Self-worth	0.179	32	0.111	0.111	32	0.164

Table (3) shows the data obtained from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which shows that there is no significant level reported for the normality of **psychological security** and **Self-worth** scores at a

significant level ($P < 0.5$), which indicates the normality of the distribution of scores in these variables.

Homogeneity of variances assumption

Table 4: Equality of variance (Levin test) in two groups

Variable	F	Df1	Df2	p
psychological security	1.915	1	30	0.177
Self-worth	3.547	1	30	0.201

As can be seen in Tables (4), the significance level indicates that the data did not question the assumption of equal variance error. In fact, the results of the Levine test to examine the assumption of

homogeneity of variance of the groups showed that both groups (experimental and control) are homogeneous in terms of variance, indicating that our subsequent results will be stable.

Table 5: Summary of results of multivariate analysis of covariance test

Test	Amount	F	Df hypothesis	Df error	P	Eta coefficient
Pillai Effect	0.991	1522.878	2	27	0.000	0.991
Lambda-Wilkes	0.009	1522.878	2	27	0.000	0.991
Hoteling Effect	112.806	1522.878	2	27	0.000	0.991
The Largest Root of Zinc	112.806	1522.878	2	27	0.000	0.991

According to the results of Table (5), group training in positive thinking skills had a significant effect on increasing psychological security and self-worth in the post-test phase at least in one of the variables ($P < 0.01$, $F = 1522.878$). Therefore, it is concluded that in

this study, group training in positive thinking skills was effective on psychological security and self-worth in 14-18-year-old girls' adolescents in Tehran

Table 6: Univariate analysis of covariance test for psychological security in the two experimental and control groups

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	P
Pretest	0.150	1	0.150	0.044	0.836
Group	7956.683	1	7956.683	2318.161	0.01
Total	99.537	29	3.432		
Error	65339	32			
Total	462.219	31			

According to the results of Table (6), the intervention, group training in positive thinking skills at the level of ($P < 0.01$, $F = 2318.161$) had a significant effect on psychological security in adolescent girls in Tehran in the post-test phase. Therefore, it is

concluded that in this study, the intervention of group training in positive thinking skills was effective on psychological security in adolescent girls' aged 14 to 18 in Tehran.

Table 7: Univariate analysis of covariance test for Self-worth in the two experimental and control groups

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	P
Pretest	285.709	1	285.709	5.812	0.022
Group	59393.759	1	59393.759	1208.151	0.01
Total	1425.626	29	1425.626		
Error	71774	32			
Total	82111.875	31			

According to the results of Table (7), the intervention, group training of positive thinking skills at the level of ($P < 0.05$, $F = 1208.151$) had a significant effect on Self-worth in girls' adolescents in Tehran in the post-test phase. Therefore, it is concluded that in this study, the intervention of group training of positive thinking skills was effective on Self-worth in girls' adolescents aged 14 to 18 in Tehran

Discussion and Conclusion: The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of group training in positive thinking skills on psychological security and self-esteem of adolescent girls. The results of multivariate and univariate analysis of covariance showed that group training in positive thinking skills is effective on psychological security and self-esteem in 14-18-year-old female adolescents in Tehran. The results obtained are consistent with the findings of Zarei et al. (2022). Jabber et al. (2013). Kiamarsi et al. (2018). Seligman and Sikrant-Mihali (2014). Pietroski and Mikuta (2012), Garcia et al. (2013). Ahmadpouri and Mottaghi (2018), Pour-Razavi and Hafezian (2017), Ellison et al. (2014), Eknell et al. (2015) and Dehghan-Nejad et al. (2017). The results of each of these studies showed that training positive thinking skills is effective in increasing peace in life, improving well-being and mental health, reducing symptoms of depression, improving self-confidence, increasing positive emotions, and reducing negative emotions and mental health. In explaining these findings, it can be said that positive thinking means facing life's challenges based on a positive perspective. In addition, it does not necessarily mean avoiding negative situations and events, but rather using life's

problems and challenges to create a positive opportunity from them. Positive thinking also refers to trying to see the good in yourself, those around you, and having faith in your abilities. Therefore, positive thinking implies focusing on the positive side of events, achieving positive results from them, and facing challenges based on a positive perspective. In addition, having a positive mindset refers to a concept in which positive thinking becomes part of your habits and using every opportunity to achieve the best results. By teaching adolescents positive thinking skills, a positive attitude towards everyday issues, especially "strong and intimate social connections with family, friends and society, how to think correctly about an event, how to deal with that event, identifying signs and symptoms of positive thinking, expressing positive beliefs and self-talk and fighting negative thoughts, acquiring the skill of changing mental images and positive internal imagery, and the skill of creating optimism through optimistic thinking, they are enabled to, according to Maslow, the theorist of the pyramid of basic human needs (1952), when human safety needs are satisfied, the organism seeks love, independence and respect. Satisfaction of safety needs leads to a mental feeling that makes a person feel more calm, courageous, and bold. Also, adolescents realize their own competences through acquiring positive thinking skills, especially through expressing positive beliefs and self-talk, and strengthen their self-worth or self-esteem. With this positive feeling, adolescents can develop their skills and abilities and have a better life. One way to teach positive thinking skills to increase self-worth to adolescents is to remind them of

their past successes at every moment and to plan and strive to achieve their goals in the future by focusing on motivation and perseverance. Teenagers with high self-worth and self-esteem will discover their talents and increase their skills. By using the positive thinking skills trained by saying positive, motivating, beautiful, and energizing sentences, students will strive to live a vibrant life by promoting awareness, strengthening social relationships, and managing stress to increase psychological security and self-worth. Finally, it is suggested that counselors and psychologists include positive thinking skills training sessions and workshops in their work schedules for psychological security and self-worth in adolescents, according to the results of the present study.

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