

Research Article

Awareness Integration: An Alternative Therapeutic Methodology to Reducing Depression, Anxiety, While Improving Low Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy in Separated or Divorced Individuals

Foojan Zeine, Psy.D, LMFT

LMFT Founder & CEO - Personal Growth Institute, Inc.

Nicole Jafari, Ed.D

Department of Human Development at California State University,

Long Beach, USA

Fatemeh Haghghatjoo, Ph.D

Founder of Nonviolent Initiative for Democracy, Inc.

ABSTRACT

Title: Awareness Integration: An Alternative Therapeutic Methodology to Reducing Depression, Anxiety, While Improving Low Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy in Separated or Divorced Individuals

Objective: A new method in psychotherapy, Awareness Integration (AI) Model, has been shown to be instrumental in delivering a successful and expedited path to recovery from a variety of psychological and emotional problems. The purpose of this study is to show that Awareness Integration Model positively impacts the negative characteristics of divorce such as depression and anxiety, while restoring self-esteem and self-efficacy in divorced or separate individuals.

Methods: Participants for this study were 14 volunteers, 25 to 64 years old, who consented to participate in a 6-hour workshop for the purpose of testing the Awareness Integration (AI) Model as well as completing both the pre and the post tests. Research method used in this study is based on Beck's, 1961, 1988, and 1993 psychometric assessments, where questions were grouped to represent measurements in depression, anxiety, self esteem, and self efficacy. Study does not use a control

group as it deemed unfeasible, and sample size is relatively small comprising of 14 participants. In the analysis section, the author offers in depth explanation to the consequence of a small sample and lack of a control group.

Results: As shown in the body of this paper, applying AI Model to volunteer participants showed 27.5% improvement in depressive moods, 37% less feeling of anxiousness and having anxiety, 15% increased self-esteem, and 13% boost in self-efficacy.

Conclusions: The pilot study testing the flexibility of AI on divorced or separated individuals suffering from depression, anxiety, low self esteem, and self efficacy, yielded positive outcomes. The comparison between pretest and posttest showed that the participants' level of depression and anxiety decreased, while the degree of self esteem and self efficacy increased.

MeSh Headings/ Keywords: Awareness; Integration; Divorce; Depression; Self-help; Anxiety; Self-esteem; Self-efficacy; Accountability; Result oriented; Goal oriented; Psychology model; Psychology interventions; Cognitive therapy; Emotional therapy; Mind-body therapy; Brief therapy; Solution focused therapy; Responsibility; Action plan

Introduction

In the recent years, particularly since the mid 1950 [1], divorce has become a common practice and strategy for couples, whose marital relationship have reached a disequilibrium. At this point, couples have the option to sever the relationship, leave problems behind, and start anew; however, the process after divorce at times can be difficult, arduous, and even impossible to endure. Historically, society has cast a stigma on people, who choose divorce over making their marriage work. According to Gerstel [1], the fact remains that being married normalizes a person, while on the contrary, being divorced [2] leads to feelings of inadequacy, failure, and not measuring up to normal societal standards. Consequently, this feeling of not fitting into

society's norm may lead to feeling less than, depressed, and incompetent.

The progressive decline in society's disapproval of divorce is magnified by the fact that divorce rate is astronomically increasing, yet marriage is still a popular social practice. According to United States as American Psychological Association [3] reports, even today marriage is common and practiced, as 90% of the population marries before the age of 50, which leads to healthier couple both physically and mentally. The down side of marriage is that approximately 40 to 50 percent of marriages result in divorce with subsequent divorce rate of 67% for second marriages, and 74% for thirds (APA, 2016). It is noteworthy to mention that it would be difficult to conclude

an exact percentage of divorce in one region or another due to numerous variables such as the economical conditions, current events, and/or social occurrences. The popularity of marriage itself leads to the perception that being married makes one whole and acceptable, while divorce remains a taboo despite its increase in the recent decades.

Marriage creates relational attachment and bonding in couples seeking closeness and security. According to Bowlby [4-7], the desire to attach to another human being for the sake of closeness and protection is a biological inherent, which starts early on in childhood, thus the broken bond of this union produces a sense of loss and abandonment, and consequently negatively impacting individual's self of being and self worth. As cited by Kitson [7], losing the comfort of a relationship, may also lead to a social disconnect, while severing the comfort zone and security that a relationship provides, ultimately creates separation anxiety as Bowlby labeled "bereavement" [4-6].

In the trilogy of *Attachment and Loss*, Bowlby later on set out to reaffirm the impact of separation on the evolutionary attachment of human beings by establishing a data-driven theory. The trilogy above firmly made the assertion to further understanding how these bonds once broken have a strong implication in both children and adults [7]. Furthermore, the separation or divorce leads to an increased degree of stress. According to previous study [8], both males and females have a traumatic experience while going through divorce. As Albrecht reports, 27% of females and 16% of males reported that they had experienced stress as a result of divorce; although, it is noted that part of the contributing factors was how each gender perceives divorce and their experience of this process [8].

In a study by Steven (1990), divorce in the country of Denmark; even though, it has a lower rate than United States might result in suicidal thoughts and consequently committing suicide. This drastic measure of couple attempting or committing suicide has been contributed to isolation, loss of support, and a deep sense of disorientation, which are characteristics of depression. Although, as once again reported by Stack [9], Stack's 1980's study of 50 American States and 3000 American counties in addition to Trovato's [10] analysis of Canadian provinces, all point to the association of divorce and suicide rate. Over all, the evidence indicated strong correlation between divorce and suicide; therefore, it is incumbent to find a solution that can offer an expedient, universal, solid, and practical strategy to address the negative side effects of divorce.

Using flexibly structured questions modeling an expansive intervention, the systematic approach of AI Model helps the learner discover unworkable thoughts, beliefs, behaviors, and charged up unresolved emotions. As a result, moving towards healing and integrating the past unintegrated parts into a healthy and more positive cognitive-emotional mapping, thus enabling the individual to choose and apply a functional, productive, and healthy life style. The AI Model is applicable in a variety of psychological problems; therefore, in order to test the broad band capabilities of this therapeutic system, the researchers set out to test the model on separated and divorced individuals suffering from anxiety, depression, low self esteem,

and low self efficacy. Furthermore, AI Model as a therapeutic solution seems worthy of investigation in how it can address and reduce the feeling of abandonment, loss of attachment, and depressive mood, all the while, repairing and reinstating healthy self esteem and self-efficacy. Based on previous success oriented results, it seems that AI Model can help individuals, who struggle with psychological challenges such as depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and other related emotional and behavioral conditions. Of course, one of the unique characteristics of AI Model is its non- invasive, swift, and self-guide features that help individuals walk through their problem as it guides them in reaching an awareness in how one views and acts upon the problem.

The Mechanism of Awareness Integration Process: The process of AI is to foster self-awareness from past to present and to integrate the various parts of the 'Self' that have been shattered and separated as a result of psychological trauma. AI Model offers step by step guidance on how to recognize the broken pieces of one's self, but also to find a way to reunite and reattach all the parts, so that it can once again function effectively and productively. Through this intricate process, the participant recognizes and identifies all the unconstructive thoughts and destructive mental strategies that reside at the core value system of the individual; all the while, they are discovering new ways to replace the undesirable thoughts with a positive and more productive principles [11].

Interpersonal relationships are an important and integral part of the Western culture as well as how individuals function in their perspective society in regard to others. Siegel [12] refers to the neurobiology role of interpersonal experiences and its connection to the efficiency of the brain functioning. The author emphasizes that the left and right hemisphere work in an integrated fashion meaning the right brain works analogically, while the left brain functions in exerting motivation. Depending on the individual's life experience, the interworking mechanism of the brain and its dependence on external events for neuro feedback leads to either efficiency in self regulation or disruption in emotional development. Individuals, who have experienced divorce or separation suffer from emotional distress; therefore, may be subject to this malfunctioning or disequilibrium of the left and right hemisphere. In accordance to Siegel's [12] findings, the AI Model aims to coordinate the internal thought processes with external events in an attempt to harmonize and integrate disruptive thoughts, while replacing them with healthy and efficient cognitive processes [11].

The 9 theoretical principles of AI include; 1) Recognizing the internal experience as a perceived reality versus an absolute external reality, 2) Potential to learn more useful and productive capabilities and thought patterns, 3) Building skills and attitudes to maintain a happy and enjoyable life comes from a life time of experience, 4) The connection between man-made internal meaning from the external events and the personal identity that is formed for the use in external application, 5) Human's capability of mentally storing of experiences including cognitively, emotionally, and somatically, 6) Integration of un-integrated structure of belief-emotion-body, 7) Self-awareness

and conscious act of making choices regarding the creation of a positive life style, 8) Skill building on how to enhance individual's capabilities, experiences, results, and relationships, 9) The final principle is based on learning how to consciously and intentionally envision desired results, raise the probability of attaining the result by planning and acting [11]. The AI Model intervention goes through 6 phases in many domains of life relevant to the participant:

Phase 1- AI as structured in multi-phases, starts with inducing an awareness of the participant's thoughts/perceptions, emotion, and behaviors in relation to their external environment and how those constructs impact their lives. Questions in this phase include: What do you think of people? How do you feel about people? How do you behave towards people? How does the way you think, feel, and behave towards people affect your life? Generalized belief systems tend to become prominent during this phase of therapy [11].

Phase 2: This phase has 3 functions, 1) Individual becomes aware of their own personal projections of others' opinion and perception of them, 2) Enhancing participant's recognition of the way internal meanings are assigned to these observations, 3) Assessing how these internal projections impact life and build skills to reality check with the outside world. Questions in this phase include: How do you assume people think about you? How do you assume people feel about you? How do you assume and observe people behaving toward you? How does the way you assume people think, feel and behave toward you affects your life? This phase is very impactful for people with high levels of anxiety and social phobia.

Phase 3: This phase is the most important one, since it is geared towards the individual's awareness of their own identity and these questions in particular capture participant's core beliefs [11]. Questions in this phase include: As you see yourself among people, looking at them while they're looking at you, what do you think about yourself? How do you feel about yourself? How do you behave towards yourself? Do you judge yourself? Are you compassionate? Are you ok? If there is no negatively charged emotion experienced, then the individual will proceed to Phase 5 within that area. If there are negative core beliefs and charged up negative emotions, then continue on Phase 4 [11].

Phase 4: In this phase, the structure of AI focuses on the simultaneously experiencing the connection between thoughts, formulas, and schemas with emotions and the body areas that maintain and reconnect intense emotions with the origin of the memory that one has decide upon the negative core belief from a traumatic or uncomfortable experience. In this phase, irrational thoughts, and strategy of decision makings are under scrutiny, while the individual examines and self assesses of how negative thoughts and emotions induce a blockage towards rational and logical thought process. By now, the participants have gained an awareness and capability to release the negativity, and replace it with tolerance and effective management of emotions [11]. Questions in this phase include: When you say [negative core belief], how do you feel about yourself? Where is the feeling

in your body? What is the intensity on a scale from 1 to 10? Encourages the participant to go toward the original memory from the felt sensation and the body and emotions, release, heal and integrate the separated or dissociated part to the whole system. A re-evaluation of the belief system about self gets created, therefore new emotions and behaviors gets associated with the self as the source of relatedness with the outside world.

Phase 5: This phase is a proactive step, the participants are coached and guided through steps in visualizing and committing themselves to a new and improved self. This phase concentrates on building a positive attitude with the thought process of being in control of one's own perceptions and actions towards self and others. Questions in this phase are phrased and structured to explore each individual Participant's values and beliefs. Who do you intend to be? How do you intend to think, feel and behave? In this phase, the participant's response determines the degree of success in implementing AI's strategy towards individual anticipation of accomplishments [11].

Phase 6: Final phase includes structuring a functional value system including intentions, emotions and behaviors that can assist the individual in every day life and a constructive mindset to be the desired positive self. This designed self can be set up as an external visual feedback through collages to create consistent reassurance and guidance.

Methods

Design of current study

A descriptive and micro-genetic study was designed to measure the applicability and effectivity of AI Model on divorced and separated individuals. Previously published study of the AI Model (2014) in the "International Journal of Emergency Mental Health and Human Resilience" indicated a 76% decrease in depression, a 60% decrease in anxiety, a 43% increase in self-esteem, and 20% increase in self-efficacy. The success of AI Model on 2014 study sample offered a worthwhile opportunity to utilize this technique on the divorced or separated population, who suffers from depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and low self efficacy as a by-product of divorce. Previous study having shown successful outcome for AI Model, prompted the researchers to set up a clinical research study and test the versatility of AI Model on various populations. On that premise, a study was designed to test AI Model on these individuals and find the correlational factors on improving depressive and anxious mood, while increasing self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Objectives/Goals/Specific Aim of the Study

The goal of this research study was to educate and train the participants on the alternative solution to combating negative impact of divorce measured using Awareness Integration Model to treat the symptoms, while minimizing depression and anxiety and raising participants' self-esteem. Implementing this goal, the study also measured the efficacy of the Awareness Integration Model in minimizing Depression and anxiety in a short term self help workshop setting.

Anticipated Outcomes and Goals

Recent reports from APA (2016) indicated that a negative factorial outcome of marriage is that approximately 40 to 50 percent result in divorce with subsequent divorce rate of 67% for second marriages, and 74% for thirds. According to other studies as discussed previously, this astronomical rate in divorce leads to negative psychological outcomes such as depression, anxiety, all the while, decreasing self-esteem and self-efficacy. Based on previous success of AI on treating depression, the researcher anticipates a hypothetical assumption that Awareness Integration Model correlationally decreases depression and anxiety, while increasing self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Methodology

Participants attended a 6-hour workshop Titled “The NEW YOU is calling YOU! Freedom from the past and a design for the future” on a voluntary basis. The workshop was held on May 31, 2015, conducted by Dr. Foojan Zeine, Psychotherapist and the originator of the AI Model, and facilitated by Dr. Fatemeh Haghigatjoo from the “Nonviolent Initiative for Democracy Organization”. The nature of this research study was based on qualitative and correlational methodology; therefore, a pretest was conducted before the AI application, while the study was concluded by giving a posttest questionnaire. Based on the qualitative nature of the study and the small sample size, a control group would not have been feasible due to the fact that literature review gave concrete evidence to the impact of divorce on decreased self efficacy, self esteem, and prevalence of depression in divorced individuals.

Population and Sample Population

To conduct this pilot study, the researchers selected a smaller sample size based on a variety of reasons. The small sample size provides visibility and observational values for qualitative analysis. The premise of the study was based on a workshop setting; therefore, a larger sample would have created a less organized and manageable forum. Ultimately, from the 14 volunteer participants between the ages of 25 to 64, who participated in the workshop, only 11 participants completed both the pre-test and the post-test. The exclusion criterion was based on the fact that the sample population must be currently divorced or separated and complaining of negativity, low self esteem, and lack of motivation.

Selection of participants

The study had been announced in several divorce Meet-Up groups in Boston, Massachusetts. The only condition to register and participate was to be recently divorced or separated. Registration had been done via Meet-Up groups’ websites. Fourteen participants registered for the workshop. Each individual participant was paid \$30 to attend the workshop on a voluntary basis.

Socioeconomic

All participants had some level of higher education beyond high school with 3 holding an associate degree, 1 undergraduate,

and 7 having earned a graduate or other types of professional degrees. Income level of the participants was that 2 claimed to have lower than \$25000/yr., where 6 put their income between \$50,000.00 to \$74,999.00, One volunteer claimed to be in the median of \$75,000 to 99,999, while one participant marked the income to be more than \$200,000.

Demographic

There was no ethnicity in the exclusion criterion; therefore, the participants, who completed the workshop identified themselves as the following: 5 Caucasian/white, 2 Asians, and 4 Middle Eastern volunteer participants in the study.

Procedure

Each participant completed an information/consent to participate form, a demographics form, 4 pre-tests before the start of the workshop. The AI questionnaire was given to the participants to use as a tool through out the workshop.

The 6-hours workshop consisted of:

1. A ½ hour lecture about the multiple phases of the divorce process
 - a. Statistics
 - b. Shake up in Marriage
 - c. Pre-Divorce Process
 - d. Separation
 - e. Legal Divorce Process
 - f. Post Divorce Process
 - g. Completion with the Marriage
2. A ½ hour lecture about the AI Model 6 phases.
3. Completing Phase 1,2,3, & 4 of the AI Model in the domain of Social Community.
4. Sharing with another participant about their experience and their findings.
5. Competing Phase 1,2,3 & 4 of the AI Model in the domain of Ex-Spouse.
6. Sharing with another participant about their experience and their findings.
7. Competing Phase 1,2,3 & 4 of the AI Model in the domain of Father.
8. Sharing with another participant about their experience and their findings.
9. Competing Phase 1,2,3 & 4 of the AI Model in the domain of Mother.
10. Sharing with another participant about their experience and their findings.
11. Competing Phase 1,2,3 & 4 of the AI Model in the domain of Parent’s Relationship.
12. Sharing with another participant about their experience and their findings.

13. Competing Phase 1,2,3 & 4 of the AI Model in the domain of Self.
14. Sharing with another participant about their experience and their findings.
15. Completing Phase 5 in the domains of ex-spouse, Intimate relationship, Children & Social Community.
16. Sharing with another participant about their experience and their findings.
17. Completing Phase 6 regarding the creation of a chosen Self-Identity.

Participants were asked to complete 4 post-tests and an evaluation form at the conclusion of the workshop.

Data Collection

The 4 dependent variables were measured by 4 standard tests as pre & post tests:

1. Beck Depression Inventory BDI-II (Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock & Erbaugh, 1961)
2. Beck Anxiety Inventory (Beck, 1988; Beck and Steer, 1993)
3. Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1965; Blascovich & Tomaka, 1993)
4. General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995)

Data Analysis

The questionnaire sample questions were based on specific and measurable criteria in the following categories:

- * Questions 1-4 to measure Depression
- * Questions 5-7 to measure Anxiety
- * Questions 8-10 to measure Self-esteem

Once the data were collected, a research assistant constructed individual excel worksheets to record each participant's completed pre-test and post-test values. Consequently, each individual's response was inputted into their perspective excel worksheet. A separate Microsoft Excel worksheet was then created to tally all the results for each question for the purpose of calculating the mean average in each corresponding category using the standard mean formula; $(X_1+X_2+X_3+\dots+X_n/n)$ X100 to reflect overall percentages. Accordingly, the standard deviation for each question in each category was calculated to show proof of concept and to ensure a strong confidence level. The standard deviation for the study showed to be between +/- 2.5, which falls under a healthy bell curve standard deviation. The calculations of standard deviation for data set is further discussed in the 'Results' section of this paper.

Discussion

Regardless of being amicable or not, divorce leaves the individual with devastating feelings of loss, depression, and anxiety. As reported in 1981, by Peck and Manocherian [13],

going through divorce brings about a great deal of change particularly in middle age women, who have to let go of an accustomed life, social status, and financial comfort. Consequently, the feeling of abandonment, mourning, loss of dreams, and failure in marriage may lead to depression. Although, these negative feelings are not solely as a result of being a middle age divorced female, but also can be seen in younger females, who experience divorce. It is concluded from various research studies that divorce leads to depressive moods and thoughts.

According to Bem's [14] Self Perception Theory, divorced individual's behavior is often measured by their attitude towards divorce, and how they perceive the consequences. Furthermore, based on longitudinal research, a person's experience of divorce predicts increases in pro-divorce attitudes with that individual [9,15]. However, regardless of an individual's own attitude, divorce itself can be an interpersonal stressor leading to development of depressive moods in each member of the entire family. Divorce as a stressor impacts not only the individual, but its effects will encompass interpersonal relationship with others as well [16].

Bowen's [17] Family System Theory, was developed as a result of psychologists gaining an interest in family structure post War War II, where there was an interest in studying family dynamics from a different point of view. In this theory, Bowen [17] suggests that family comprises of different systems requiring each entity to operate in harmony and equilibrium to gain maximum efficiency as a whole emotional unit. However, adversary factors interfering with the system's overall operation, such as financial struggles, death, psychological deviance, divorce, and other negative events may shift the unit off its balance and thus free falling it into disequilibrium. Divorce as a negative factor has a correlational impact to the system's operation, thus shifting the relationship between members into a negative spiral. This negativity could bring about anxiety, depression, misconduct, and other behavioral misconduct requiring the system to receive support in order to regain the equilibrium [17].

Divorce or separation can also impact an individual's interpersonal relationships and personal values in a negative way. The individual may face a reevaluation of their cultural beliefs and relationship with others. In doing so, through the course of divorce, a person will consciously reexamine their basic belief system, identities, and relationships [19], making further growth possible. The Family Systems Theory confirms the fact that divorce is a contributing factor in creating disequilibrium in individual's emotional well being; however, Bowen believes that individuals need to find a way to avoid fault-finding and continue to mature through the process [19]. The findings showed that of those, who participated in the AI study, 36% fewer individuals blamed or criticized themselves, which confirms the applicability and efficiency of AI Model on creating and improved emotional balance.

Traditionally, theorists have focused on two stages of divorce: 1) Emotional or affective stage, and 2) Recovery in terms of divorced individuals' behavior in maintaining balance

and control. Therefore, in both stages, when grief strikes, it would be in response to different losses, with each stage may contain a different intensity Hagemeyer [20]. Research has also shown a correlation between marital status and mental disorder. Divorced individuals develop a hypersensitivity at the time of separation and divorce; therefore, they may face six times higher chance of needing medical attention than those of married couples (Bloom et al., 1978; Briscoe et al., 1973), as cited by Peck & Manocherian [13]. The AI study addresses these emotional stages and the negative reaction to each milestone by focusing on different emotional period, such as depression, anxiety, low self esteem, and negative self efficacy. The result of the study of divorced participants, who took part in AI Model training showed 27.5% significant improvement in depressive moods, while a 37% revealed to be less anxious or having anxiety. As shown through AI Model, participants were able to show tremendous improvement in each emotional category of depression and anxiety, thus making the transition from emotional stage to recovery platform. Furthermore, as a result of participants responding to questions 8 thru 10 yielded 15% improvement in measuring posttest self-esteem of participants. The total impact of AI Model on participants suffering from low self efficacy was 13% increase in feeling more resourceful and confident.

Golan [15], stated that during divorce a person may experience psychological distortion, thus leading o pathological problem. These problems may present themselves at different time with different intensity. In order to better understand when the transitional state has been reached by the divorcee, scientists need to be able to estimate the time this transition has been reached, and whether the person is working though problems. This understanding was as a result of combining the psychosocial and crisis theory that has led the scientists to an understanding of what a normal transition may entail. These transitional stages represent a terminated life, while spearheading to a new one. AI Model is structured in a modular format and phase base, which enables the therapist to address each stage of mental distortion individually and on differentiated periodicals. This type of structure would be beneficial to the participants in addressing problems, while seeking an optimal solution [11].

Study limitations and recommendations

The AI Model is a new and revolutionary concept; therefore, the first time research studies on novel ideas could lead to important learning and discoveries. This particular study bears important information in regards to future considerations in similar research studies. In that respect, the researchers believe this study could benefit from a larger sample size of perhaps between 30 to 40 participants, which will increase the confidence level of data generalization. Furthermore, conducting the AI Model research study with a larger sample size could provide additional information, such as data variation, gender differences, which could in turn increase the data analysis confidence level.

The study type was designed to be correlational and qualitative; therefore, no control group was set up to measure

comparative data. At the same time, lack of a control group makes it difficult to confidently ascertain the level of significance of AI Model and its impact on separated or divorced participants. The researchers recommend a new study to be conducted with a control group in place to increase the confidence level of AI Model's efficiency.

The AI Model study administered a pre-test and post-test questionnaire to measure the impact of the workshop treatment on the participants. However, the pre-test and post-test were given right before and after the workshop. The timing of these tests being so close in timing may have interfered with the true result; therefore, to make sure the timing is not an interference factor in the result. The recommendation is to take an appropriate amount of time before the post-test is administered to ensure the validity of the result.

Results

The fact that sample size was small, statistical calculations were done using a Microsoft Excel spread sheet. Empirical data for mean and Standard Deviation (Square Root of Variances) of AI Model on each category such as Depression, Anxiety, Self Esteem, and Self Efficacy, were calculated using the following formula [22]:

$$\sigma = \sqrt{[\sum(x-\text{mean})^2 / N]}$$

In the formula above, the following designations were used:

- σ = standard deviation
- x = each value of dataset
- mean = averages of each category
- N = the total number of data points in each category per participant
- \sum = The sum of $(x_i - \text{mean})^2$ for all data points

Measurement flaws for such calculations to consider may be 'Time Sampling Error', where the post test was given to the participants immediately after the workshop not allowing for time laps and deeper understanding of the AI Model presented at the workshop. Examples of the 'Time Sampling Errors' may include changes in participants' own characteristics (e.g., fatigue, illness, anxiety) and the environment of the clinic (e.g., distractions, temperature), where the study took place. To reduce this type of error, it is recommended that a Test-Retest Reliability Coefficient [22] for administration of the posttest to be considered in the future AI Model application. Based on the standard deviation formula, the following results were calculated as presented below.

Depression: On the pretest and posttest, questions 1- 4 were designed to measure depression. Utilizing the participants' responses to the questions designed to measure depression before and after the AI workshop and training, 10% fewer participants had feelings of being punished, 36% fewer blamed or criticized themselves, 36% were less critical of themselves, while only 10% less blamed themselves for unfortunate events in their life, and finally 18% fewer participants have lost interest in other people or activities. The overall improvement in the

mood of participants was that 27.5% of the sample studies showed an improvement in depressive moods.

Anxiety: Questions 5 through 7 were designed to measure anxiety level of participant in the pretest and posttest relevancy. The result of the tests showed that 27% of the participants are better able to relax, while 18% more of the individuals are able to relax, in addition to 10% more being able to relax. Further results showed that 18% completely feel less fearful, 10% Mildly less fearful, and 10% Severely less fearful. In physical improvement leading to less anxious mode, 10% mildly less had difficulty breathing in compare to 10% of those, who had noted moderately less had difficulty breathing. On the whole, the participants showed an overall 37% improvement in feeling anxious and having anxiety.

Self-Esteem: Testing AI Model previously had shown an improvement in individual's self esteem; therefore, questions 8 thru 10 were designed to show pretest and posttest results in whether AI is instrumental in lifting self worth and self value in individuals, who have experienced loss as a result of divorce or separation. Confirming previous AI study's results, participants in this test showed a reduction of 10% in individuals, who did not have reasons to be proud of their accomplishments as well as 10% less of sample studies showing lesser strong feelings in being proud and 10% less feeling lack of respect for themselves. As a result of participants responding to questions 8 thru 10 yielded 15% improvement in measuring posttest Self-Esteem of participants.

Self-Efficacy: The study also aimed to measure self efficacy in individuals, who have experienced divorce or separation. Based on past study showing improvement in this area, questions 11 through 12 were designed to assess Self-Efficacy and whether AI also increases this criterion in individuals, who have suffered emotional loss. As predicted, posttest showed 10% increase in remaining calm when facing difficulties, and 16% increase in knowing how to handle foreseen situations. The total impact of AI Model on participants suffering from low self efficacy was 13% increase in feeling more resourceful and confident.

Conclusions

Individual's reaction towards divorce and how each person handles such process is determined by their attitude and level of commitment in their relationship. Furthermore, this said reaction may also depend on the gender of the individual experiencing separation and divorce [23]. Studies have shown that there is a level of crisis in the divorce process, which adversely impacts the mental balance of the individual. Regaining interpersonal equilibrium is crucial after divorce or separation; however, if existing problem solving mechanism is not sufficient and the divorced individual is having difficulty reaching balance, then additional help may be required. The inter mechanism of AI specifically addresses this type of crisis by offering six phases of in- depth soul searching. The participant in AI Model learns to recognize and identify all the unconstructive and scattered thoughts and destructive mental strategies. Through working on these negative and critical cognitive processes, the individual

learns new strategies to eventually integrate positive thoughts and constructive mental capacities. Consequently, the mental crisis is averted, and equilibrium is achieved.

Therapy may also instrumental in restoring family system's structure and promoting a swifter equilibrium to be brought back to the unit. In addition, to assist with the transition from the accustomed life into a changed and new existence, therapists can be influential in helping the individual's transition. Brown's [24] suggestions coincide with the functionality of AI Model offering self guided structured therapy, while the individual performs the therapeutic exercises [25], all the while overcoming depression and anxiety. Research showed the benefits of psychological intervention in helping divorced or separated individuals regain a sense of self and their eventual transition to a new life, reaffirms the positive results AI Model offers in this study. In conclusion, the AI Model is instrumental in reducing the negative characteristics of divorce such as depression and anxiety [26-28], at the same time, allowing the individuals to regain an increased level of self esteem and self efficacy. It is noteworthy to mention that such successful conclusion should encourage the researcher to conduct additional pilot studies to investigate the broader application of AI Model on other psychological and emotional challenges that individuals may experience in a variety of situations. Further studies would definitely be beneficial to both scientific field and individuals, who are in need of practical and expedited methods of therapeutic techniques.

References

1. Gerstel N. Divorce and Stigma: Social Problems, Oxford University Press on behalf of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. 1987; 34: 172-186.
2. Shafer K, Jensen T, Holmes E. Divorce stress, stepfamily stress, and depression among emerging adult stepchildren. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. 2017; 26: 851-862.
3. American Psychological Association. Marriage & Divorce. 2016.
4. Bowlby J. Processes of mourning. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. 1961; 42: 317-339.
5. Bowlby J. Attachment and Loss. Library of Congress Catalog Number: 83-71445. 1969.
6. Bowlby J. The Origins of Attachment Theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth *Developmental Psychology*. 1992; 28: 759-775. Reprinted in from R. Parke, P. Ornstein, J. Reiser, & C. Zahn-Waxler Edtn. A century of developmental psychology. 1994; 15: 431-471.
7. Hammen C. Stress and depression. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*. 2005; 1: 293-319.
8. Albrecht S. Family Relations. *National Council on Family Relations*. 1980; 29: 59-68.
9. Stack S. The Effect of Divorce on Suicide in Denmark, 1951-1980. *The Sociological Quarterly*. Wiley on behalf of the Midwest Sociological Society. 1990; 31: 359-370.

10. Trovato F. Interprovincial migration and suicide in Canada, 1971-78. *Int J Soc Psychiatry*. 1986; 32: 14-21.
11. Zeine F. Awareness Integration: A new Therapeutic Model. *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health and Human Resilience*. 2014; 16: 60-65.
12. Siegel DJ. The developing mind: toward a neurobiology of interpersonal experience. New York: Guilford Press. 1999.
13. Peck JS, Manocherian JR. Divorce in the Changing Family Life Cycle. *Changing Family Life Cycle*. 1988; 15: 335-369.
14. Bem DJ. Self-perception theory. In L. Berkowitz Edtn. *Advances in experimental social psychology*. 1972; 6: 1-62.
15. Amato PR, Booth A. The consequences of divorce for attitudes toward divorce and gender roles. *Journal of Family Issues*. 1991; 12: 306-322.
16. Hammen C. Stress and depression. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*. 2005; 1: 293-319.
17. Kerr ME. One Family's Story: A Primer on Bowen Theory. The Bowen Center for the Study of the Family. 2000.
18. Wiseman R. Crisis theory and the process of divorce. *Social Casework*. 1975; 56: 205-212.
19. Brown J. Growing Yourself Up: how to bring your best to all of life's relationships; p3-5; Exisle Publishing. 2012.
20. Hagemeyer S. Pastoral Psychol: Making sense of divorce grief. 1986; 34: 237.
21. Golan N. Passing through transitions, New York: Free Press. 1981.
22. Reynolds CR, Livingston RB. Mastering Modern Psychological Testing. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. 2012.
23. Whitton SW. Attitudes Toward Divorce, Commitment, and Divorce Proneness in First Marriages and Remarriages. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 2013; 75: 276-287.
24. Brown MD. Creating new realities for the newly divorced: A structural and individual. *Journal of Psychotherapy and the Family*. 1985; 1: 101-120.
25. Beck AT, Ward CH, Mendelson M, Mock J, Erbaugh J. An inventory for measuring depression. *Archives of General Psychiatry*. 1961; 4: 561-571.
26. Beck AT, Steer RA. Beck Anxiety Inventory Manual. San Antonio: Harcourt Brace and Company. 1993.
27. Beck AT, Steer RA, Garbin MG. Psychometric properties of the Beck Depression Inventory: Twenty-five years of evaluation. *Clinical Psychology Review*. 1988; 8: 77-100.
28. Bogolub EB. Social Work. 1991; 36: 428-433.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE:

Foojan Zeine, LMFT Founder & CEO - Personal Growth Institute, Inc., USA, E-mail: foojanzeine@gmail.com

Submitted 27 February, 2017

Accepted 05 June, 2017