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Increasing forgiveness: Design of a reading technique based on the social learning theory

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Forgiveness is a human strength mainly helpful for the well being of social relationships. Research has showed the potential benefits of forgiving for physical and mental health as well as for restoring relationships. As a result a variety of interventions seeking to improve forgiving have been successfully developed. It is assumed that interventions lasting less than two hours have not effect on forgiveness. This study tests the effectiveness of a brief self-designed reading technique based on the Social Learning Theory in the promotion of episodic forgiveness. 125 university students completed the Transgression Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM-18) and were enrolled and randomized to either experimental or control group. The former read a self-designed text including a testimony of forgiveness (intervention) and the later a neutral text. After the intervention, participants completed again TRIM-18. Results indicated that the experimental group significantly increased the levels of benevolence and reduced avoidance and revenge against the offender. The main contribution into the research on forgiveness interventions is the demonstration that effectiveness of a technique might be not contrary to briefness.

Biography

Maria Gamiz is an Assistant professor and researcher in the Psychology and Mental Health Department of the Medicine and Health Sciences School in the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, Spain. The research focus on personal strengths, mainly in forgiveness which was the topic of her dissertation.

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