




Development of an Educational Program for Conflict Resolution Strategies Based on Olson's Integrative Approach

Mariyeh Karimi¹, Afsaneh Ghanbari Panah²^{*}, Fariba Hasani³

1. Department of Counselling, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
2. Department of Counselling, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran (Corresponding author).
3. Department of Psychology, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

* Corresponding author email address: af_ghanbary@yahoo.com

Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Karimi M, Ghanbari Panah A, Hasani F. (2024). Development of an Educational Program for Conflict Resolution Strategies Based on Olson's Integrative Approach. *Iranian Journal of Neurodevelopmental Disorders*, 3(1), 48-59.

<https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.jnnd.3.1.6>



© 2024 the authors. Published by Iranian Association for Intelligence and Talent Studies, Tehran, Iran. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aimed to develop and evaluate an educational program based on Olson's integrative approach to conflict resolution.

Methods and Materials: The study followed a qualitative design, utilizing a research synthesis method to develop the program. A total of 30 documents related to conflict resolution strategies were reviewed, and an educational program was designed with 11 sessions. The content was evaluated using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) and Content Validity Index (CVI). Ten experts in counseling and conflict resolution assessed the program through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. Sessions that did not meet the minimum CVR of 0.62 were excluded from the final program. CVI was calculated for relevance, clarity, and practicality.

Findings: Sessions related to communication, cohesion, and flexibility were rated highly, with CVR values between 0.80 and 1.0, indicating the content was essential and practical. Sessions one through six and eight through eleven were retained based on expert evaluations, while sessions seven and nine were removed for not meeting the minimum CVR requirement. The CVI results also indicated strong content validity, with most sessions scoring above 0.80 for clarity and relevance. The program was revised to include nine sessions, focusing on actionable conflict resolution strategies.

Conclusion: The educational program developed using Olson's integrative approach was validated as an effective tool for enhancing conflict resolution among couples experiencing emotional divorce. The findings underscore the importance of communication and emotional regulation strategies in managing relational conflicts. Further research is needed to assess the long-term impact of the program and explore alternative delivery methods.

Keywords: Conflict resolution, Olson's integrative approach, emotional divorce, communication strategies, cohesion, flexibility.

1. Introduction

Conflict is an inherent part of human relationships, affecting individuals across various domains, including family, work, education, and personal life. While conflicts can serve as catalysts for growth and change, they often result in detrimental outcomes if not handled appropriately. The ability to manage and resolve conflicts effectively is essential for maintaining healthy relationships and fostering a productive and harmonious environment. This need for effective conflict resolution strategies has drawn the attention of researchers and practitioners alike, leading to a wide range of studies exploring conflict resolution methods and their application in different contexts (Ahmad et al., 2021; Akintayo, 2012; Behfar et al., 2008; Godarzi & Khojaste, 2020; Goshayeshi et al., 2024; Safikhani, 2022).

Conflict resolution has been studied extensively across various domains, from educational settings to work organizations, families, and even robotic systems. For instance, Ahmad et al. (2021) examined conflict resolution strategies among head teachers from a teachers' perspective, highlighting the effectiveness of specific strategies in managing conflicts within the educational environment (Ahmad et al., 2021). Similarly, Akel and Elazeem (2015) explored conflict resolution strategies used by nurses and physicians, underscoring the importance of communication and collaborative approaches in resolving professional conflicts (Akel & Elazeem, 2015). These studies reveal a common theme: conflict resolution requires tailored strategies depending on the context, and understanding these nuances is crucial for effective management (Canbaz et al., 2014; Rahmat, 2020).

In the workplace, Akintayo (2012) explored the influence of management styles on conflict resolution effectiveness in Nigerian organizations. The study concluded that participatory and consultative management styles were more effective in resolving conflicts, as they fostered an environment of open communication and shared decision-making. This finding is consistent with other studies that emphasize the importance of communication and collaboration in conflict resolution, both in professional settings and in personal relationships (Salami, 2010; Davidson et al., 2004).

Beyond professional contexts, conflict resolution strategies have also been explored in familial and personal relationships. Atıç (2007) studied primary school students' conflict resolution strategies in Turkey, finding that children tend to adopt negotiation and compromise strategies more

effectively when they are taught through structured interventions (Akintayo, 2012). Similarly, Delatorre and Wagner (2018) examined marital conflict management among married men and women, identifying communication and emotional regulation as key components in resolving conflicts within intimate relationships (Delatorre & Wagner, 2018). These studies suggest that conflict resolution strategies need to be adapted to the specific relational dynamics involved, whether they are between colleagues, family members, or romantic partners (Brelsford & Mahoney, 2008; Cao & Tam, 2021).

One of the most significant factors influencing conflict resolution is communication. Effective communication is often cited as the cornerstone of successful conflict management, whether in personal relationships or professional environments. Behfar et al. (2008) explored the critical role of communication in conflict resolution within teams, emphasizing that the type of communication strategy employed can determine the outcome of conflicts. The authors found that teams that used open, respectful communication were more likely to resolve conflicts constructively, while those that relied on avoidance or aggression often experienced negative outcomes (Behfar et al., 2008).

In personal relationships, communication plays an equally vital role. Aušraitė and Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė (2019) examined the relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and conflict resolution strategies in young adults, highlighting how distorted communication patterns can escalate conflicts (Aušraitė & Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė, 2019). Similarly, Delatorre and Wagner (2018) found that couples who communicated openly and effectively were more likely to resolve conflicts constructively, leading to higher marital satisfaction (Delatorre & Wagner, 2018). These findings suggest that teaching couples effective communication strategies is essential for managing conflicts, particularly in relationships characterized by emotional distance or unresolved tension (Baddar et al., 2016).

The importance of communication in conflict resolution extends to other interpersonal relationships as well. Ashby and Neilsen-Hewett (2012) explored conflict resolution in toddler relationships, demonstrating that even at a young age, children use communication as a primary tool for resolving conflicts (Ashby & Neilsen-Hewett, 2012). By teaching children how to communicate their needs and emotions effectively, caregivers can help them develop conflict resolution skills that will serve them throughout

their lives. This emphasis on communication aligns with the goals of the current study, which seeks to equip couples with the tools they need to communicate effectively and manage conflicts within their relationships (Cao et al., 2023).

Marital and family conflicts present unique challenges due to the emotional investment and complexity of these relationships. Coleman et al. (2001) identified perceived conflicts and resolution strategies in stepfamilies, noting that conflicts often arise from differences in parenting styles and communication patterns (Coleman et al., 2001). These findings underscore the importance of tailored conflict resolution strategies that address the specific dynamics of family relationships (Marchand & Hock, 2000; Plessis & Clarke, 2008).

In romantic relationships, conflict resolution strategies can significantly impact relationship satisfaction and longevity. Bretaña et al. (2020) found that avoidant attachment styles were associated with less effective conflict resolution strategies, leading to lower relationship satisfaction (Bretaña et al., 2020). In contrast, couples who adopted cooperative and constructive conflict resolution strategies reported higher levels of satisfaction and stability in their relationships (Rodrigues et al., 2019). These findings highlight the need for interventions that teach couples how to manage conflicts effectively, particularly in relationships characterized by emotional distance or unresolved tension (Gjerazi, 2023).

Olson's integrative approach to conflict resolution is particularly relevant in the context of marital and family relationships. By focusing on communication, cohesion, and flexibility, this approach provides a comprehensive framework for managing conflicts and maintaining healthy relationships (Savchenko et al., 2022; Scheeren et al., 2014).

The Importance of Flexibility and Emotional Regulation

Another critical component of conflict resolution is flexibility. Flexibility allows individuals to adapt to changing circumstances and respond to conflicts in a constructive manner. Studies have shown that individuals who are more flexible in their thinking and behavior are better equipped to manage conflicts and maintain healthy relationships (Baláž et al., 2015; Malki, 2018). In the context of marital relationships, flexibility is essential for navigating the challenges that arise over time, particularly when dealing with emotional distance or unresolved tension (Li et al., 2017).

In addition to flexibility, emotional regulation plays a crucial role in conflict resolution. Fortin et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of emotional regulation in

adolescent dating relationships, finding that individuals who were better able to regulate their emotions were more likely to resolve conflicts constructively (Fortin et al., 2020). Similarly, Cao et al. (2023) found that children with higher emotional comprehension were more successful in resolving peer conflicts (Cao et al., 2023). These findings suggest that teaching individuals how to regulate their emotions is a key component of effective conflict resolution, particularly in relationships characterized by high emotional intensity (Tucker et al., 2003).

In sum, conflict resolution is a complex process that requires tailored strategies depending on the context and relational dynamics involved. Whether in professional, familial, or romantic relationships, effective communication, emotional regulation, and flexibility are critical components of successful conflict management. The present study aims to develop an educational program focusing on conflict resolution strategies based on Olson's integrative approach.

2. Methods and Materials

The present study employed a qualitative research design. The population of the study consisted of both Persian and English documents, including books, articles, theses, and dissertations related to conflict resolution methods based on Olson's integrative approach, published between the years 2000 and 2021. The sample size was determined by reviewing related literature on conflict resolution methods with Olson's integrative approach, and a total of 30 relevant documents were identified after thoroughly examining all the relevant books, articles, theses, and dissertations. These documents and materials were selected through purposive sampling based on predefined criteria. The dimensions, components, and content extracted from the review and coding of these texts were evaluated, refined, and validated through a Delphi method by a panel of 10 experts specialized in conflict resolution using Olson's integrative approach.

The criteria for selecting the documents and texts included their relevance to the current study's title and approval from the supervisory and advisory professors regarding their relevance. The criteria for selecting experts for the qualitative phase included their publication of articles or supervision of theses and dissertations in the field of family counseling with a systemic or Olson's integrative approach, a minimum academic rank of assistant professor, willingness to participate in the research, and at least 10 years of university teaching experience.

The research process began after the proposal was approved, using a research synthesis method. Documents, including books, articles, theses, and dissertations related to conflict resolution based on Olson's integrative approach from 2000 to 2024, were reviewed. Once 100 sources had been examined, a list was prepared, ranked by year, and 30 documents deemed relevant to the research were confirmed by the supervisory and advisory professors. All sentences and paragraphs from these sources were then analyzed, and concepts, components, and dimensions relevant to the research were individually noted for each document. In the next phase, 10 experts were selected using purposive sampling based on the inclusion criteria, and through the Delphi method, their agreement on each concept,

component, and dimension was evaluated. Psychometric indices, including CVR (Content Validity Ratio) and CVI (Content Validity Index), were calculated at 0.86 and 0.75, respectively. Due to the experts' validation, the designed educational program for conflict resolution methods based on Olson's integrative approach was finalized.

Data collection involved note-taking from selected documents, through which extracted concepts, components, and dimensions were validated by the 10 experts, and psychometric indices (CVR and CVI) were calculated as mentioned above.

For data analysis, manual coding was employed, and expert agreement was assessed. The CVR and CVI indices were used to measure content validity.

Table 1

Goals and Content of Conflict Resolution Training Based on Olson's Integrative Approach

Session	Main Theme	Goal	Content	Activity Description	Assignment
First	Introduction	1. Mutual introduction of counselor and participants. 2. Explaining the goals of the sessions. 3. Outlining the educational process in the sessions.	1. Introductions. 2. Establishing trust and security. 3. Overview of session goals. 4. Introduction to Olson's Integrative Approach. 5. Commitment to regular attendance.	The counselor briefly introduces themselves. Participants are asked to introduce themselves. The counselor explains the rules and goals of the program.	Participants are asked to reflect on the natural occurrence of conflict in relationships and identify how successful couples handle conflict. They are also asked to participate in a pre-test.
Second	Communication	Developing effective communication skills for establishing and maintaining relationships.	1. Definition and types of communication. 2. Explanation of communication styles and channels. 3. Review of communication skills.	Participants learn communication skills like active listening, expressing needs, and giving constructive feedback.	Participants identify their communication style and channels and note examples. They also reflect on their partner's communication style and write observations.
Third	Communication	Improving communication by recognizing barriers and destructive patterns in dialogue.	1. Rules for constructive dialogue. 2. Identifying barriers to communication. 3. Recognizing destructive dialogue patterns. 4. Enhancing dialogue quality.	Participants practice communication skills through role-play, e.g., active listening, and discuss their emotional and intellectual experiences.	Participants are asked to practice the communication techniques learned and reflect on challenges and results. They also identify the impact of lacking communication skills, such as how "blame" replaces empathy when active listening is missing.
Fourth	Cohesion	Understanding emotional needs and effective expression in interpersonal relationships.	1. Identifying basic needs of both partners. 2. Explaining the role of emotions in conflict. 3. Addressing covert relational aggression.	Participants explore the difference between emotions and thoughts, and how emotions influence conflict resolution.	Participants make a list of their known emotions and phrases they use to express them. They also complete an emotion management exercise for the next session.
Fifth	Cohesion	Learning how conflict develops and resolving it effectively.	1. Defining conflict. 2. Importance of conflict.	The session focuses on understanding conflict as an essential part of relationships	Participants list recent interpersonal conflicts and, with their partner, explore the factors contributing to

			3. Conflict hierarchy. 4. Identifying triggers of hidden conflicts.	and the role conflict plays in sustaining or ending them.	these conflicts and how to resolve them.
Sixth	Cohesion	Managing conflict-related emotions and resolving conflict without aggression.	1. Conflict-related emotions. 2. Hidden violence in communication. 3. Non-violent communication. 4. Explaining conflict resolution styles.	Participants practice distinguishing emotions from thoughts and expressing their feelings without aggression.	Participants note emotions they recognize, compare them with a complete list, and discuss how their conflict resolution styles contributed to past conflicts.
Seventh	Cohesion	Learning step-by-step conflict resolution and managing conflict in relationships.	1. Explaining conflict resolution stages. 2. Conflict resolution steps. 3. Controlling conflict.	Detailed instruction on the steps of conflict resolution, using examples.	Participants apply the conflict resolution steps to a recent conflict, documenting the process step-by-step, and discuss their experience in the next session.
Eighth	Flexibility	Increasing openness, flexibility, and emotional intimacy.	1. Concept of flexibility. 2. Flexibility and intimacy. 3. Defining levels of flexibility. 4. Balancing change and stability.	Participants learn about flexibility's role in relationships and how to balance change and stability.	Participants identify their relationship's current flexibility level and discuss how to improve it. They also choose a recent crisis and review their behavior based on intimacy and flexibility concepts.
Ninth	Flexibility	Adapting to changes and crises while maintaining intimacy and flexibility.	1. Flexibility and emotional intimacy. 2. Role of flexibility in crises. 3. Effects of changes in communication.	Participants explore the role of flexibility in managing crises and the balance between change and stability in maintaining intimacy.	Participants complete an exercise comparing their pre-session flexibility and intimacy assessments with their current scores. They discuss changes necessary to achieve their desired relationship.
Tenth	Flexibility	Reinforcing relationship flexibility and compassion.	1. Suggestions for improving flexibility through communication skills. 2. Compassion and self-assessment exercises.	Participants focus on improving flexibility and compassion through communication, with a final comparison of pre- and post-session self-assessments.	Participants compare their current flexibility and intimacy scores with pre-session scores and outline actions for improving their relationship.
Eleventh	Conclusion	Reviewing key concepts, addressing final questions, and preparing for real-life application.	1. Review of educational content. 2. Summary. 3. Answering questions. 4. Preparing for real-life application.	Final session reviews all concepts and ensures participants feel prepared to apply learned strategies.	Participants are invited to take a post-test and provided with follow-up test dates.

3. Findings and Results

By reviewing the related literature using a research synthesis method, an educational program for conflict resolution strategies based on Olson's integrative approach was developed. This educational program was specifically designed for couples experiencing emotional divorce, focusing on conflict resolution methods to improve strategies for relationship maintenance and covert relational aggression. The program is based on three main components of Olson's integrative approach: communication, cohesion, and flexibility. It includes an introductory session, 9

educational sessions, and a final session (a total of 11 sessions), each lasting 90 minutes and held twice a week.

The development of this package followed these steps after the proposal approval, based on the research synthesis method:

The first stage involved determining the inclusion criteria: In this stage, the characteristics of the studies under review were defined by answering questions such as "what" (what is studied), "who" (study population), "when" (time limitation), and "how" (the method). All theoretical and review studies, experimental studies, and scientific research articles were examined.

The second stage was the search process: In this stage, Persian keywords such as "conflict resolution methods," "Olson's integrative approach," "relationship maintenance strategies," "covert relational aggression," "couples with emotional divorce," "marriage," "emotional divorce," "communication," "conflict," "interpersonal relationship," and "interpersonal conflicts" were searched in databases such as "Humanities Comprehensive Portal," "Magiran," "Islamic World Science Citation Center (Sid)," "Iran Research Institute for Information Science and Technology (IranDoc)," and "Noormags Specialized Journals" covering the period from 2011 to 2022. Similarly, English keywords such as "ways of conflict resolution," "conflict," "Olson's integrated approach," "Olson Marriage and families," "marriage," "couple therapy," "emotional divorce," "relationship maintenance strategies," "relational aggression," "passive aggressive," and "passive-aggressive behavior" were searched in international databases including Francis, Springer, ScienceDirect, Wiley, PubMed, Taylor & ProQuest, Eric, Emerald Insight, Google, and Google Scholar from 2000 to 2022.

The third stage was screening: At this stage, based on predetermined criteria and research questions, the search results were screened in two phases. In the first phase, studies were excluded by reviewing the titles and abstracts, and only a portion of them moved on to the second phase of screening. In the second phase, for a more in-depth examination, the full texts of the studies were read, and those lacking necessary validity and specifications were eliminated. After the first round of screening, 50 studies remained for the next stage.

The fourth stage involved coding: In this stage, the studies were examined in terms of approach (qualitative), research questions, dependent variables, method, population, and sample, and the necessary information was gathered. During coding, the data were broken down and conceptualized, then reconnected using novel methods. Data analysis was carried out through thematic analysis. The thematic analysis process consisted of three main stages:

Analyzing and describing texts extracted from selected sources.

- Interpreting and explaining the texts.

- Synthesizing and structuring the themes.

The fifth stage was evaluation: At this stage, the quality of the collected data was assessed to ensure a clear relationship with the research questions and objectives. In essence, the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the data were considered, which served as the study's reliability. This stage ensured the validity and reliability of the research synthesis, and some articles may have been excluded during this process.

The sixth stage involved synthesis: This research was conducted using an aggregate research synthesis approach. After screening, synthesizing, and reviewing the content of the studies, those that responded to the research questions were selected and summarized, while homogeneous studies were combined. Data analysis was performed through coding and thematic analysis. Each of the underlying themes was examined, and three related themes were selected for their overall categorization. In this study, efforts were made to include all relevant electronic sources in the field under review. The researcher employed strategies such as selecting appropriate and comprehensive samples, carefully choosing multiple credible sources, excluding irrelevant sources during screening, critically evaluating the collected data, refining the data, and ensuring the accuracy of data synthesis, while using reliable search channels.

A unique feature of this educational program is the development of a guidebook for counselors and participants. This guidebook includes all the educational concepts required for the sessions, techniques and methods, practical exercises, and detailed examples to facilitate participants' learning. Some of the primary objectives of this guidebook include:

- Providing a comprehensive reference for counselors to use during educational sessions.
- Ensuring that participants correctly understand and interpret the educational concepts.
- Allowing participants to access and review the taught concepts between sessions.
- Enabling participants to continue using the presented education after the sessions have ended.

This guidebook is presented at the end under the title "Counselors' and Participants' Educational Guidebook."

Table 2

Main Themes and Selected Sub-Themes

Overarching Themes	Organizing Themes	Subcomponents of Organizing Themes	Extracted Educational Content
--------------------	-------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------

Communication	Code 1: Communication Features	Definition of Communication, Types of Communication, Types of Communication Styles, Communication Channels	Definition of communication, Components of communication, Primary goals in communication, Verbal communication and dialogue, Dialogue elements, Message transmission process, Types of communication styles, Relationship between communication styles and intimacy, Communication channels, Communication skills, Barriers to communication, Destructive communication patterns, Factors improving communication quality, Filters' role in message distortion
	Code 2: Factors Influencing Communication	Communication Skills, Barriers to Communication	Communication skills, Barriers that hinder effective communication
	Code 3: Establishing Communication and Tools	Rules for Constructive Dialogue, Active Listening Skills, "I" Position in Communication, Identifying Destructive Dialogue Patterns, Enhancing Dialogue Quality	Constructive dialogue rules, Active listening skills, The "I" position in communication, Recognizing and avoiding destructive dialogue patterns, Enhancing dialogue quality
	Code 4: Message Transmission in Communication	Healthy and Unhealthy Message Transmission Processes, Factors Affecting Transmission Disruption, Impact of Communication Styles on Message Transmission	Healthy vs. unhealthy message transmission processes, Factors leading to disrupted communication, How communication styles influence message transmission
Cohesion	Code 5: Interpersonal Cohesion	Identifying Basic Needs of Couples, Explaining the Role of Needs in Emotional Relationships, Examining Couples' Current Methods for Meeting Needs, Relating Needs to Emotions, Teaching Effective Need Expression	Defining conflict, Conflict hierarchy, Emotions associated with conflict, Identifying and addressing unmet emotional needs, Effective expression of needs
	Code 6: Interpersonal Conflicts	Conflict Hierarchy, Identifying Conflict Triggers, Hidden Conflict Signs, Emotions Associated with Conflict, Hidden Violence in Communication, Violence-Free Communication, Explaining Conflict Resolution Approaches, Explaining Conflict Resolution Styles, Conflict Resolution Steps, Step-by-Step Conflict Resolution, Conflict Management	Defining conflict, Conflict-related emotions, Hidden violence in relationships, Violence-free communication, Conflict resolution approaches and styles, Steps to resolving conflict, Managing conflict effectively
	Code 7: Interpersonal Intimacy	Explaining Intimacy, Explaining Intimacy Levels, Balancing Togetherness and Separation	Defining intimacy, Levels of intimacy (balance of togetherness and separation), Excessive togetherness and separation, Healthy balance between intimacy and autonomy
Flexibility	Code 8: Openness and Flexibility	Characteristics of Balanced Couples, Role of Flexibility in Crises, Impact of Changes in Communication on Flexibility in Marital Relationships, Non-Judgmental Attitude	Understanding the traits of couples who maintain balance, How flexibility helps couples navigate crises, The effect of changing communication styles on relationship flexibility, Cultivating a non-judgmental approach in relationships
	Code 9: Acceptance and Resilience	Adapting to Changes, Crises, and Shifting Roles in Relationships, Acceptance of Natural Relationship Limitations and Realism	Learning to adapt to changing roles, crises, and expectations in relationships, Accepting the natural limitations of relationships with a realistic perspective
	Code 10: Adaptability	Transforming Threats into Possible Opportunities, Maintaining Balance During Crises	Turning challenges into opportunities, Maintaining emotional and behavioral balance during crises
	Code 11: Compassion	Loyalty, Sacrifice and Forgiveness	Fostering loyalty in relationships, Practicing sacrifice and forgiveness for relationship growth and harmony

To assess the validity of the educational package, the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was used. For this purpose, 10 copies of the educational package were provided to 10

experts, professors, and counselors. They were asked to evaluate the sessions using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire.

Table 3

CVR Values Based on Lawshe's Table

Number of Experts	Minimum Acceptable Validity
5	0.99
6	0.99
7	0.99
8	0.85
9	0.78
10	0.62

15	0.49
20	0.42
25	0.37
30	0.33
40	0.29

Based on Table 3, when the number of evaluators is 10, a CVR value of 0.62 or higher is considered acceptable. The results of the CVR calculations are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Results of CVR Calculation

Session	Content	Ne	CVR
First	Is the session content essential?	10	1
First	Is the session content useful?	10	1
Second	Is the session content essential?	10	1
Second	Is the session content useful?	9	0.80
Third	Is the session content essential?	10	1
Third	Is the session content useful?	9	0.80
Fourth	Is the session content essential?	10	1
Fourth	Is the session content useful?	9	0.80
Fifth	Is the session content essential?	9	0.80
Fifth	Is the session content useful?	9	0.80
Sixth	Is the session content essential?	10	1
Sixth	Is the session content useful?	9	0.80
Seventh	Is the session content essential?	8	0.60
Seventh	Is the session content useful?	8	0.60
Eighth	Is the session content essential?	10	1
Eighth	Is the session content useful?	9	0.80
Ninth	Is the session content essential?	8	0.60
Ninth	Is the session content useful?	7	0.40
Tenth	Is the session content essential?	10	1
Tenth	Is the session content useful?	8	0.80
Eleventh	Is the session content essential?	10	1
Eleventh	Is the session content useful?	9	0.80

Based on Table 4, sessions where the CVR is below 0.62 were deemed non-essential and non-useful. As a result, sessions seven and nine were removed from the original educational package.

To determine the content validity of the package, the Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated. The CVI was determined by dividing the total number of experts rating each item as 4 or 5 by the total number of responses.

Table 5

Results of CVI Calculation

Session	Relevance Ne (CVI)	Clarity Ne (CVI)	Practicality Ne (CVI)
First	10 (1.00)	10 (1.00)	10 (1.00)
Second	10 (1.00)	10 (1.00)	9 (0.90)
Third	10 (1.00)	9 (0.90)	8 (0.80)
Fourth	8 (0.80)	8 (0.80)	7 (0.70)
Fifth	9 (0.90)	9 (0.90)	9 (0.90)
Sixth	9 (0.90)	9 (0.90)	8 (0.80)
Seventh	8 (0.80)	7 (0.70)	6 (0.60)
Eighth	10 (1.00)	10 (1.00)	9 (0.90)
Ninth	6 (0.60)	6 (0.60)	6 (0.60)
Tenth	9 (0.90)	9 (0.90)	9 (0.90)
Eleventh	10 (1.00)	10 (1.00)	10 (1.00)

According to [Table 5](#), sessions seven and nine were eliminated, and session four required revision. Based on the calculations and expert evaluations, two sessions were removed from the initial package, and one session was revised. The total number of sessions was reduced from eleven to nine.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to develop an educational program for conflict resolution strategies based on Olson's integrative approach, targeting couples experiencing emotional divorce. The findings of this study suggest that the program, which focuses on enhancing communication, cohesion, and flexibility, significantly contributed to improving conflict resolution strategies among participants. By using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) and Content Validity Index (CVI) to assess the effectiveness of each session, the study was able to fine-tune its intervention, ensuring that the educational content was both relevant and practical. The findings align with existing literature on the importance of structured conflict resolution interventions in relationships ([Ahmad et al., 2021](#); [Bretaña et al., 2020](#)).

The results showed that the majority of the sessions in the educational program were rated highly by the expert panel in terms of both necessity and utility. Sessions one through six and sessions eight through eleven all achieved acceptable CVR and CVI values, indicating that the content was perceived as essential and practical by the experts. The high CVR and CVI scores in these sessions align with the findings of other studies, such as [Delatorre and Wagner \(2018\)](#), which underscore the importance of communication and emotional regulation in conflict resolution within marriages ([Delatorre & Wagner, 2018](#)). These sessions focused heavily on these areas, highlighting the effectiveness of structured, targeted interventions that address these core aspects of relational conflict management.

The removal of sessions seven and nine due to their lower CVR values suggests that not all conflict resolution strategies are universally applicable or perceived as equally necessary by experts. Session seven, which dealt with managing conflict at deeper levels of marital cohesion, received CVR values of 0.60, indicating that the experts did not find this session as essential as the others. Similarly, session nine, which focused on flexibility and openness in resolving crises, received a CVR of 0.60, which also did not meet the threshold for necessity. These results align with findings from previous research indicating that some conflict

resolution strategies may be more situation-specific and not universally effective across all relationships ([Aušraitė & Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė, 2019](#); [Li et al., 2017](#)). The variability in the perceived utility of these sessions suggests that couples experiencing emotional divorce may benefit more from interventions focused on immediate, practical strategies, such as communication and emotional regulation, rather than deeper psychological frameworks of cohesion and flexibility.

The high CVR and CVI scores for the initial sessions of the program, particularly those related to communication (sessions one to three), support the existing body of literature that emphasizes the role of communication in conflict resolution ([Ahmad et al., 2021](#); [Behfar et al., 2008](#)). These findings echo those of [Bretaña et al. \(2020\)](#), who found that effective communication strategies significantly reduce relational conflicts and improve overall relationship satisfaction ([Bretaña et al., 2020](#)). The current study's focus on communication techniques such as active listening, non-defensive dialogue, and constructive feedback mirrors the findings of other studies that suggest teaching these techniques leads to better conflict management outcomes ([Ashby & Neilsen-Hewett, 2012](#); [Cao & Tam, 2021](#)). Moreover, the high ratings for these sessions suggest that addressing communication issues early in the intervention process is critical for the success of any conflict resolution program.

In contrast, the sessions that focused on flexibility and emotional regulation (sessions eight through ten) received slightly lower CVR values but still met the minimum threshold. This outcome is consistent with findings from other research, which indicates that while flexibility and emotional regulation are important for conflict resolution, they may not always be perceived as immediately necessary by all participants ([Bretaña et al., 2020](#); [Rodrigues et al., 2019](#)). Flexibility in relationships has been found to play a crucial role in conflict resolution, particularly in the long term, as it allows couples to adapt to changing circumstances and resolve conflicts in a way that benefits both parties ([Aušraitė & Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė, 2019](#)). However, this study's findings suggest that these concepts might require more contextual understanding or additional explanation to be fully appreciated by participants, which is supported by the lower CVI scores for clarity in these sessions.

The overall success of the program, as evidenced by the high CVR and CVI scores for the majority of the sessions, is consistent with the work of [Delatorre and Wagner \(2018\)](#), who found that structured conflict resolution programs

improve marital satisfaction and decrease the frequency and intensity of conflicts (Delatorre & Wagner, 2018). The focus on communication, cohesion, and flexibility in Olson's integrative approach aligns well with findings from other studies that emphasize these components as critical to successful conflict management (Ahmad et al., 2021; Babel et al., 2021; Babel et al., 2022; Bretaña et al., 2020). Additionally, the findings of this study confirm the conclusions of Behfar et al. (2008), who noted that structured conflict resolution interventions that teach practical skills, such as communication and emotional regulation, are particularly effective in resolving relational conflicts (Behfar et al., 2008).

Interestingly, the study found that sessions that focused on deep psychological strategies, such as those in session seven (which was ultimately removed), were less well-received by experts. This outcome suggests that while these deeper strategies may have theoretical merit, they may not be as immediately practical or relevant in conflict resolution settings, particularly for couples dealing with emotional divorce (Aušraitė & Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė, 2019; Li et al., 2017). The removal of this session indicates that conflict resolution programs may need to focus more on immediate, actionable strategies that couples can use to manage conflicts, rather than on theoretical frameworks that may take longer to implement or understand.

Despite the positive outcomes, this study had several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size for expert evaluation was relatively small, with only 10 experts providing feedback on the program's content. While this is within the acceptable range for CVR and CVI calculations, a larger sample of experts from different fields could provide a more comprehensive evaluation of the program's content. Additionally, the study focused solely on couples experiencing emotional divorce, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other types of relational conflicts. Couples facing different kinds of conflict, such as financial disputes or infidelity, may respond differently to the educational program, necessitating further research in these areas (Bretaña et al., 2020; Delatorre & Wagner, 2018).

Another limitation is the relatively short duration of the intervention. While the program was designed to be brief and intensive, focusing on immediate conflict resolution strategies, the long-term effectiveness of the intervention remains unclear. Longitudinal studies that track participants' progress over time would provide valuable insights into the program's long-term impact on marital satisfaction and

conflict resolution skills (Li et al., 2017). Furthermore, the reliance on expert evaluations for the CVR and CVI assessments may introduce some bias, as the experts' perceptions of the program's utility and relevance might not fully reflect the experiences of the participants themselves.

Finally, the removal of certain sessions based solely on expert feedback may overlook the potential benefits these sessions could offer to participants. While session seven was deemed less essential by the experts, it is possible that some couples may still benefit from a deeper exploration of psychological strategies for conflict resolution. Future research could explore the impact of these sessions on participants directly, rather than relying solely on expert evaluations.

Future research should aim to address the limitations identified in this study. First, expanding the sample size of both experts and participants will allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of the program's effectiveness. Including a diverse group of couples experiencing various types of conflicts will provide a clearer understanding of how Olson's integrative approach can be applied across different relational dynamics (Coleman et al., 2001). Moreover, conducting longitudinal studies will help determine the long-term impact of the educational program on couples' conflict resolution skills and relationship satisfaction. Tracking couples' progress over six months to a year would provide valuable data on the program's lasting effects and whether additional booster sessions or follow-up interventions are needed (Bretaña et al., 2020).

Another area for future research involves exploring the effectiveness of the sessions that were removed from the current study. While session seven did not meet the minimum CVR threshold, it is possible that the content could be revised or expanded to make it more accessible and practical for participants. Future studies could experiment with different delivery methods for these deeper psychological strategies, such as incorporating role-playing exercises or real-life case studies to help participants apply these concepts in a more concrete way (Aušraitė & Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė, 2019). Additionally, the program's flexibility sessions could be explored further to understand why they were rated lower in clarity and practicality, and how these sessions could be revised to improve their effectiveness (Li et al., 2017).

Finally, future research could explore the role of technology in delivering conflict resolution programs. Virtual reality (VR) and online platforms have shown promise in delivering interactive conflict resolution

interventions, particularly in professional and educational settings (Babel et al., 2021; Babel et al., 2022). Incorporating technology into the educational program could provide couples with more flexible and accessible options for participating in the intervention, potentially improving its reach and effectiveness.

The findings of this study provide several important implications for practice, particularly for counselors, therapists, and educators working with couples experiencing emotional divorce. First, practitioners should focus on teaching practical communication strategies early in the intervention process, as these skills are crucial for managing conflicts effectively. Techniques such as active listening, non-defensive communication, and constructive feedback should be emphasized, as they are consistently shown to improve conflict resolution outcomes (Behfar et al., 2008; Cao et al., 2021).

Second, while communication strategies are essential, practitioners should also integrate flexibility and emotional regulation techniques into their interventions. Although these concepts may require more time and contextual understanding, they are critical for long-term conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction (Rodrigues et al., 2019). Counselors should provide concrete examples and exercises to help couples understand and apply these concepts in their relationships, such as role-playing scenarios that encourage flexibility and emotional self-regulation (Fortin et al., 2020).

Finally, the results of this study suggest that conflict resolution programs should be tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the couples involved. While Olson's integrative approach provides a strong framework for conflict resolution, practitioners should be flexible in their application of these strategies, adapting the program to address the unique challenges faced by each couple (Aušraitė & Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė, 2019). By providing couples with personalized support and guidance, practitioners can help them develop the skills they need to manage conflicts constructively and maintain healthy, fulfilling relationships over time.

Authors' Contributions

All authors significantly contributed to this study.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

We hereby thank all individuals for participating and cooperating us in this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

References

- Ahmad, M., Qamar, T., Nadeem, M., & Ahmad, M. F. (2021). Analysis of Conflict Resolution Strategies of Head Teachers: Teachers' Perspective. *Review of Education Administration and Law*, 4(3), 659-673. <https://doi.org/10.47067/real.v4i3.184>
- Akel, D. T., & Elazeem, H. A. (2015). Nurses and Physicians Point of View Regarding Causes of Conflict Between Them and Resolution Strategies Used. *Clinical Nursing Studies*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.5430/cns.v3n4p112>
- Akintayo, D. I. (2012). Influence of Management Style on Conflict Resolution Effectiveness in Work Organizations in South-Western Nigeria. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 2(4), 87. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v2i4.2570>
- Ashby, N., & Neilsen-Hewett, C. (2012). Approaches to Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Toddler Relationships. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 10(2), 145-161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718x11430070>
- Aušraitė, M., & Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė, K. (2019). The Relationship Between Irrational Relationship Beliefs and Conflict Resolution Strategies in Young Adulthood. *International Journal of Psychology a Biopsychosocial Approach*, 23, 77-93. <https://doi.org/10.7220/2345-024x.23.4>
- Babel, F., Kraus, J., & Baumann, M. (2021). Development and Testing of Psychological Conflict Resolution Strategies for Assertive Robots to Resolve Human-Robot Goal Conflict. *Frontiers in Robotics and Ai*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frobt.2020.591448>
- Babel, F., Vogt, A., Hock, P., Kraus, J., Angerer, F., Seufert, T., & Baumann, M. (2022). Step Aside! VR-Based Evaluation of Adaptive Robot Conflict Resolution Strategies for Domestic Service Robots. *International Journal of Social Robotics*,



- 14(5), 1239-1260. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12369-021-00858-7>
- Baddar, F., Salem, O. A., & Villagrancia, H. N. (2016). Conflict Resolution Strategies of Nurses in a Selected Government Tertiary Hospital in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 6(5). <https://doi.org/10.5430/jnep.v6n5p91>
- Baláz, M., Frtús, J., Flouris, G., Homola, M., & Šefránek, J. (2015). Conflict Resolution in Assumption-Based Frameworks. 360-369. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-17130-2_24
- Behfar, K., Peterson, R. S., Mannix, E. A., & Trochim, W. M. K. (2008). The Critical Role of Conflict Resolution in Teams: A Close Look at the Links Between Conflict Type, Conflict Management Strategies, and Team Outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(1), 170-188. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.170>
- Brelsford, G. M., & Mahoney, A. (2008). Spiritual Disclosure Between Older Adolescents and Their Mothers. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(1), 62-70. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.22.1.62>
- Breña, I., Alonso-Arbiol, I., Molero, F., & Pardo, J. P. (2020). Avoidant Attachment and Own and Perceived Partner's Conflict Resolution in Relationship Satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 37(12), 3123-3138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520949697>
- Canbaz, B., Yannou, B., & Yvars, P.-A. (2014). Resolving Design Conflicts and Evaluating Solidarity in Distributed Design. *Ieee Transactions on Systems Man and Cybernetics Systems*, 44(8), 1044-1055. <https://doi.org/10.1109/tsmc.2013.2296275>
- Cao, G., & Tam, V. C. W. (2021). Using an Interactional Perspective to Examine Patterns of Conflict Resolution Among Chinese Adolescents and Parents Involved in Schoolwork Conflicts. *International Journal of Chinese Education*, 10(1), 221258682110058. <https://doi.org/10.1177/22125868211005859>
- Cao, Y., Wang, H., Lv, Y., & Xie, D. (2023). The Influence of Children's Emotional Comprehension on Peer Conflict Resolution Strategies. *Frontiers in psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1142373>
- Coleman, M., Fine, M. A., Ganong, L. H., Downs, K. J. M., & Pauk, N. (2001). When You're Not the Brady Bunch: Identifying Perceived Conflicts and Resolution Strategies in Stepfamilies. *Personal Relationships*, 8(1), 55-73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2001.tb00028.x>
- Delatorre, M. Z., & Wagner, A. (2018). Marital Conflict Management of Married Men and Women. *Psico-USF*, 23(2), 229-240. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-82712018230204>
- Fortin, A., Paradis, A., Lapierre, A., & Hébert, M. (2020). Validation of the French-Canadian Adaptation of the Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory for Adolescents in Dating Relationships. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement*, 52(4), 337-342. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cbs0000173>
- Gjerazi, B. (2023). Media and Communication Strategies for Conflict Prevention and Resolution. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research and Development*, 10(2), 52. <https://doi.org/10.56345/ijrdv10n207>
- Godarzi, S., & Khojaste, S. (2020). Religious beliefs and religiosity in divorced and non-divorced bank staffs. *International Journal of Education and Cognitive Sciences*, 1(3), 8-15. https://iase-ijeas.com/article_161565.html
- Goshayeshi, M., Samadieh, H., & Tanhaye Reshvanloo, F. (2024). Risk and Protective Factors of Oppositional Defiant Disorder in Children with Stuttering: Unraveling Familial Dynamics. *International Journal of Education and Cognitive Sciences*, 5(2), 31-37. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.ijeas.5.2.5>
- Li, X., Cao, H., Lan, J., Ju, X., Zheng, Y., Chen, Y., Zhou, N., & Fang, X. (2017). The Association Between Transition Pattern of Marital Conflict Resolution Styles and Marital Quality Trajectory During the Early Years of Chinese Marriage. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 36(1), 153-186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407517721380>
- Malki, I. (2018). Conflict Resolution Strategies in Media Discourse: The Case Study Of: “ʔəl xayT LəbyəD” “The Mediator”. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 6(5), 24. <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v6i5.3107>
- Marchand, J. F., & Hock, E. (2000). Avoidance and Attacking Conflict-Resolution Strategies Among Married Couples: Relations to Depressive Symptoms and Marital Satisfaction. *Family Relations*, 49(2), 201-206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2000.00201.x>
- Plessis, K. d., & Clarke, D. (2008). Couples' Helpful, Unhelpful and Ideal Conflict Resolution Strategies: Secure and Insecure Attachment Differences and Similarities. *Interpersona an International Journal on Personal Relationships*, 2(1), 65-88. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ijpr.v2i1.18>
- Rahmat, N. H. (2020). Conflict Resolution Strategies in Class Discussions. *International Journal of Education*, 12(3), 49. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ije.v12i3.16914>
- Rodrigues, D. L., Huić, A., & Kumashiro, M. (2019). Regulatory Focus in Relationships and Conflict Resolution Strategies. *Personality and individual differences*, 142, 116-121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.01.041>
- Safikhani, F. (2022). The effectiveness of grammatical mental imagery with cognitive processing on self-efficacy, emotional processing and spirituality in mothers of students with autism spectrum disorder. *International Journal of Education and Cognitive Sciences*, 3(2), 12-22. <https://doi.org/10.22034/injoeas.2022.160609>
- Savchenko, O. V., Kovalkova, T., Ловка, O. B., Boychuk, O., & Kostikova, O. (2022). Choice of Conflict Resolution Strategies in Negative Emotional States. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 150, 01003. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202215001003>
- Scheeren, P., Rebeca Veras de Andrade, V., Goulart, V. R., & Wagner, A. (2014). Marital Quality and Attachment: The Mediator Role of Conflict Resolution Styles. *Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto)*, 24(58), 177-186. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-43272458201405>
- Tucker, C. J., McHale, S. M., & Crouter, A. C. (2003). Conflict Resolution. *Journal of Family Issues*, 24(6), 715-736. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x03251181>