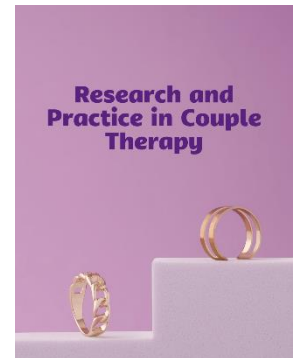




# Effect of Emotional Clarity Enhancement Training on Marital Satisfaction and Dyadic Coping

1. Božidar. Potočnik<sup>ID</sup>: Faculty of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine, University of Ljubljana, Poljanski nasip 58, Ljubljana 1000, Slovenia
2. Matjaž. Gomilšek<sup>ID</sup>: Community Health Centre Slovenj Gradec, Partizanska 16, Slovenj Gradec SI-2380, Slovenia
3. Neža. Kompara Lukančič<sup>ID</sup>: Faculty of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine, University of Maribor, Taborska 8, Maribor 2000, Slovenia

\*corresponding author's email: Bozidar.Potocnik@gmail.com



## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of Emotional Clarity Enhancement Training (ECET) in improving marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among married individuals. A randomized controlled trial was conducted with 30 married participants from Slovenia, assigned equally to an intervention group and a waitlist control group. The intervention group participated in a six-session ECET program over six weeks, focusing on emotion identification, expression, and empathic responsiveness. Both groups were assessed at pre-test, post-test, and a five-month follow-up using standardized measures: the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale and the Dyadic Coping Inventory. Data were analyzed using repeated measures ANOVA with Bonferroni post-hoc tests, employing SPSS version 27. Statistical analyses revealed significant group  $\times$  time interaction effects for both marital satisfaction ( $F(2, 56) = 22.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .442$ ) and dyadic coping ( $F(2, 56) = 23.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .457$ ). Post-hoc comparisons showed that participants in the intervention group experienced significant improvements in marital satisfaction between pre-test and post-test (mean difference = 10.91,  $p < .001$ ) and sustained gains at follow-up (mean difference = 8.74,  $p < .001$ ). Similarly, dyadic coping scores increased significantly from pre-test to post-test (mean difference = 10.14,  $p < .001$ ) and remained elevated at follow-up (mean difference = 8.62,  $p < .001$ ). No significant changes were observed in the control group over time. The findings support the efficacy of Emotional Clarity Enhancement Training in promoting long-term improvements in marital satisfaction and dyadic coping. By fostering emotional awareness and collaborative stress management, the intervention offers a valuable tool for strengthening marital relationships and enhancing emotional resilience in couples.

**Keywords:** Emotional clarity, marital satisfaction, dyadic coping, couple intervention, emotional regulation

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## Introduction

The quality of marital relationships has long been recognized as a critical determinant of individual well-being, relational satisfaction, and family stability. Among the many psychological constructs that shape relational dynamics, *emotional clarity*—the ability to identify, label, and make sense of one's emotions—has emerged as a pivotal factor in both intrapersonal regulation and interpersonal functioning within couples (Cho & Choi, 2024; Hwang & Choi, 2025). Individuals with higher emotional clarity tend to express their emotional needs more constructively, respond more empathically to their partners, and cope more effectively with relational stressors. However, emotional clarity alone is not sufficient for relational health; it must be



accompanied by *dyadic coping*—the coordinated effort between partners to manage stressors as a team (Barden et al., 2024; Lippold et al., 2024).

The concept of dyadic coping (DC), introduced by Bodenmann, extends beyond individual coping strategies to encompass how couples appraise, communicate, and respond to stress collectively (Ștefănuț et al., 2021). Adaptive dyadic coping not only strengthens relational bonds but also buffers the negative impact of external stressors, such as illness, economic instability, or major life transitions (Colclough et al., 2023; Paschali et al., 2021). For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, couples who engaged in supportive dyadic coping reported better psychological resilience and interaction quality (Lillie et al., 2021; Relvas et al., 2023). Conversely, a lack of coordinated coping can exacerbate emotional disconnection, leading to lower marital satisfaction and increased conflict (Crangle, 2021).

Marital satisfaction, a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional intimacy, conflict resolution, and mutual understanding, has consistently been associated with emotional regulation abilities and dyadic coping strategies (Maharini & Ginanjar, 2023; Parise et al., 2019). When emotional clarity is low, individuals may struggle to accurately communicate their needs, misinterpret their partner's behaviors, and fall into maladaptive interaction cycles. Emotional confusion often manifests in heightened reactivity, withdrawal, or hostile communication—all of which undermine marital satisfaction (Faccini et al., 2024; Ko & Choi, 2022).

Recent research suggests that emotional clarity plays a mediating role between mindfulness and adaptive emotion regulation, influencing both individual mental health and relational functioning (Hwang & Choi, 2025; Ko & Choi, 2022). Individuals with clearer emotional understanding tend to engage in more constructive problem-solving and show greater openness to collaborative stress management (Cho & Choi, 2024; Vedelago et al., 2022). This capacity is particularly important in emotionally intense contexts such as chronic illness, infertility, or caregiving, where emotional attunement and dyadic regulation are essential for maintaining closeness and reducing distress (Arshad & Bibi, 2020; Grégoire et al., 2021; Molgora et al., 2019).

Despite the documented importance of emotional clarity, interventions targeting this skill within a relational framework remain scarce. Most couple-based programs focus on communication skills or conflict resolution, while neglecting the foundational emotional processes that drive interpersonal behaviors (Faccini et al., 2024). Training couples in emotional clarity may bridge this gap by fostering deeper self-awareness, enhancing mutual empathy, and laying the groundwork for more effective dyadic coping (Macías-Espinoza et al., 2022; Ranieri et al., 2024). When partners can label and articulate their emotions with precision, it becomes easier to engage in synchronous coping efforts, validate one another, and reduce miscommunication (Martos et al., 2019; Puigbó et al., 2019).

Studies in neuropsychology and affective science further support the significance of emotional clarity as a precursor to interpersonal coordination. For example, individuals with poor emotion differentiation often exhibit heightened physiological stress responses and reduced cognitive flexibility, both of which hinder effective dyadic interaction (Barden et al., 2024; Macías-Espinoza et al., 2022). In contrast, those with refined emotional awareness demonstrate increased parasympathetic activation, which facilitates calm engagement and emotional responsiveness in relational contexts (Cho & Choi, 2024). This physiological readiness may explain why emotional clarity is associated with improved dyadic coping outcomes in couples dealing with trauma, chronic illness, or caregiving demands (Colclough et al., 2023; Crangle, 2021).

A growing body of research also highlights the role of emotional clarity in mitigating relationship distress among individuals with high emotional burden, such as caregivers or those coping with depression or anxiety (Cheng et al., 2025; Colclough et al., 2023). In these populations, the inability to make sense of one's emotional experience often spills over into relationship dynamics, contributing to frustration and disengagement. On the other hand, emotionally clear individuals are more likely to

engage in supportive coping behaviors, reinforcing a sense of partnership and mutual understanding (Maharini & Ginanjar, 2023; Relvas et al., 2023).

The integration of emotional clarity training into couple-based interventions holds promise for improving relational outcomes by enhancing the *affective synchrony* between partners. Research by Vedelago and colleagues demonstrates that tailoring coping strategies to attachment styles—such as combining emotion-focused strategies for anxiously attached individuals and problem-focused strategies for avoidantly attached ones—can yield more effective outcomes when both partners possess emotional clarity (Vedelago et al., 2022). This nuance underscores the importance of equipping partners with the meta-cognitive tools to recognize their emotional styles and apply suitable dyadic coping techniques (Faccini et al., 2024; Meskó et al., 2022).

Moreover, cultural and gender differences further complicate the ways emotional clarity and dyadic coping manifest in relationships. Studies show that women, on average, tend to score higher in emotional awareness but may be more vulnerable to emotional overload in high-stress dyadic contexts (Macías-Espinoza et al., 2022; Meskó et al., 2022). Men, while potentially less expressive, benefit significantly from structured emotional clarity interventions, especially when these are framed within a skills-based, non-pathologizing approach (Merel et al., 2021; Ranieri et al., 2024). Such findings point to the need for gender-sensitive training models that promote balanced emotional expression and shared coping.

The present study aims to contribute to this growing field by evaluating the effectiveness of an *Emotional Clarity Enhancement Training (ECET)* program designed to improve **marital satisfaction** and **dyadic coping** among couples. Building on theoretical frameworks of emotional intelligence and systemic coping, the intervention introduces participants to skills such as emotion labeling, emotional needs communication, and empathetic listening. Unlike traditional marital therapies that primarily target conflict resolution, this approach focuses on internal emotional processing as a mechanism for external relational change (Faccini et al., 2024; Ko & Choi, 2022).

To date, no study has systematically examined the long-term effects of emotional clarity training on both marital satisfaction and dyadic coping using a randomized controlled design. Given the strong empirical ties between these constructs and relational health, this research fills a critical gap in intervention science. Additionally, the inclusion of a five-month follow-up period offers insights into the sustainability of training effects—a feature often missing in short-term interventions (Lippold et al., 2024; Paschali et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the intersection of emotional clarity and dyadic coping represents a powerful yet underutilized target for couple-based intervention. As emotional clarity strengthens the internal map of affective experience, dyadic coping provides the relational infrastructure through which emotional information is processed, shared, and transformed into coordinated action. This study investigates whether a structured, skills-based training in emotional clarity can improve not only individual emotional functioning but also relational processes such as stress communication and mutual support.

## Methods and Materials

### Study Design and Participants

This study employed a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design with a control group and an intervention group, each consisting of 15 married participants (n = 30) recruited from the general population in Slovenia through local community outreach and counseling centers. Inclusion criteria were being legally married, aged between 25 and 50 years, and having no history of severe psychiatric or neurological disorders. Participants were randomly assigned to either the Emotional Clarity Enhancement Training group or the waitlist control group using a computer-generated randomization sequence. The

intervention lasted six weeks, and all participants were followed up for a period of five months post-intervention to assess the sustainability of outcomes.

### Measures

To measure marital satisfaction, the study employed the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale developed by Olson, Fournier, and Druckman in 1983. This standardized instrument is widely used to assess the quality of marital relationships and is part of the broader ENRICH inventory. The EMS includes 35 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). The scale encompasses various dimensions of marital satisfaction, including communication, conflict resolution, sexual relationship, financial management, and shared values. Higher scores indicate greater marital satisfaction. The EMS has been extensively validated across diverse populations, demonstrating strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.80 to 0.90) and test-retest reliability. Numerous studies have supported the construct validity and criterion-related validity of the EMS, making it a robust tool for assessing the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving marital relationships.

The Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI), developed by Bodenmann in 2008, was used to assess the couples' stress communication and coping processes. This 37-item instrument evaluates how partners perceive and manage stress together through a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “very rarely” (1) to “very often” (5). The DCI includes several subscales: stress communication, supportive dyadic coping, delegated dyadic coping, negative dyadic coping, and common dyadic coping. The total score provides a global assessment of dyadic coping quality, with higher scores indicating more adaptive coping mechanisms between partners. The instrument has shown excellent psychometric properties, including high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha values typically above 0.85) and good construct validity across international samples. Its sensitivity to changes over time makes it particularly suitable for evaluating the outcomes of therapeutic or training interventions focused on relational dynamics.

### Intervention

The Emotional Clarity Enhancement Training (ECET) was designed as a psychoeducational and experiential program aimed at improving participants' ability to identify, understand, and articulate their emotions within the marital context. The training was grounded in emotional intelligence and emotion-focused approaches, incorporating individual reflection, cognitive restructuring, and dyadic exercises. Sessions were held weekly, each lasting 60 to 90 minutes, and involved both group discussions and couple-based activities to facilitate practical application of the concepts in real-life relational interactions.

#### Session 1: Introduction to Emotions and Emotional Clarity

The first session provided an overview of the program's objectives and the importance of emotional clarity in marital relationships. Participants were introduced to the concept of emotions as informative and functional responses, and the distinction between emotional awareness and emotional clarity was clarified. Exercises focused on identifying common emotional states, understanding their physiological and cognitive manifestations, and reflecting on how emotional confusion or avoidance impacts communication and conflict in relationships. A baseline emotion recognition activity was conducted, and participants received a homework assignment to log their emotions daily.

#### Session 2: Improving Emotional Vocabulary and Self-Awareness

This session focused on expanding emotional vocabulary and enhancing participants' ability to differentiate between nuanced emotional states. Through guided exercises and emotional word charts, couples practiced labeling complex emotions (e.g., guilt vs. shame, frustration vs. anger) and explored the cultural and personal barriers to emotional articulation. Techniques

such as the “Emotion Wheel” and emotional journaling were introduced. Participants also reflected on how early family experiences shaped their emotional expression patterns. Homework included daily labeling of emotions with contextual triggers and bodily sensations.

#### Session 3: Understanding Emotional Triggers and Appraisal

In the third session, participants learned to identify emotional triggers and the cognitive appraisals underlying their emotional reactions. The concept of appraisal theory was simplified and made applicable to everyday situations. Couples engaged in exercises identifying recent emotional conflicts, dissecting the events, appraisals, and resulting emotions. Role-playing and guided questioning techniques helped each partner clarify how misinterpretations or unmet needs contribute to emotional escalation. Homework involved identifying at least two emotionally triggering events and journaling their appraisal process.

#### Session 4: Expressing Emotions Constructively in Relationships

This session emphasized the importance of expressing emotions clearly and non-defensively. Participants practiced "I-messages" and emotionally descriptive language to express needs without blame or criticism. Specific techniques for regulating tone, timing, and delivery were modeled and rehearsed. Couples engaged in structured dialogues using scripted prompts to foster clarity and empathy. The impact of emotional invalidation was also discussed. Homework required practicing one emotionally honest conversation with a partner and reflecting on the experience in writing.

#### Session 5: Enhancing Dyadic Emotional Responsiveness

The fifth session bridged individual emotional clarity with dyadic coping. Couples were taught how to recognize and respond to their partner's emotions with empathy and validation. The session introduced the concept of “emotional co-regulation” and guided participants through exercises such as mirroring, empathic listening, and affect labeling for partners. Real-life emotional incidents were role-played to rehearse supportive reactions. The homework involved journaling instances where emotional responsiveness was successfully or unsuccessfully applied during the week.

#### Session 6: Integration, Relapse Prevention, and Future Planning

The final session reviewed key concepts and skills learned throughout the training. Couples reflected on personal growth and relational shifts experienced during the program. Strategies for relapse prevention, emotional self-check-ins, and sustaining emotional clarity in daily life were developed collaboratively. Each couple created a personalized “Emotional Clarity Maintenance Plan” to use in future conflicts or emotionally charged situations. A closing discussion allowed for open sharing, feedback, and mutual encouragement. Post-intervention reflections were collected to assess insight and readiness for independent application.

### Data analysis

To evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to compare changes in marital satisfaction and dyadic coping across three time points: pre-test, post-test, and five-month follow-up. Where significant interaction effects were found, Bonferroni post-hoc tests were conducted to determine the specific time points at which differences occurred. All analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27, with a significance threshold set at  $p < .05$ . Data were checked for missing values, outliers, and violations of statistical assumptions including normality, sphericity, and homogeneity of variances before running the main analyses.

### **Findings and Results**

The sample included 30 married individuals (60% female and 40% male) ranging in age from 26 to 49 years ( $M = 37.14$ ,  $SD = 6.72$ ). Regarding education, 46.6% ( $n = 14$ ) had completed a bachelor's degree, 30% ( $n = 9$ ) held a high school diploma, and 23.3% ( $n = 7$ ) had a postgraduate degree. In terms of employment status, 73.3% ( $n = 22$ ) were employed full-time, 13.3% ( $n = 4$ ) were part-time workers, and 13.3% ( $n = 4$ ) were homemakers. The average duration of marriage among participants was 10.87 years ( $SD = 4.39$ ), with a range from 2 to 21 years. No significant demographic differences were found between the intervention and control groups at baseline.

**Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Marital Satisfaction and Dyadic Coping by Group and Time**

Variable	Group	Pre-test M (SD)	Post-test M (SD)	5-Month Follow-up M (SD)
Marital Satisfaction	Intervention	61.47 (5.83)	72.38 (6.14)	70.21 (6.42)
	Control	60.93 (6.21)	61.67 (6.08)	61.14 (5.97)
Dyadic Coping	Intervention	82.64 (7.45)	92.78 (6.93)	91.26 (6.58)
	Control	81.89 (7.62)	82.44 (7.13)	82.17 (7.25)

As shown in Table 1, the intervention group demonstrated marked increases in both marital satisfaction and dyadic coping over time. Marital satisfaction rose from a pre-test mean of 61.47 ( $SD = 5.83$ ) to 72.38 ( $SD = 6.14$ ) post-test, slightly declining to 70.21 ( $SD = 6.42$ ) at the five-month follow-up. The control group showed minimal change. Similarly, the intervention group's dyadic coping scores increased from 82.64 ( $SD = 7.45$ ) at pre-test to 92.78 ( $SD = 6.93$ ) post-test and slightly decreased to 91.26 ( $SD = 6.58$ ) at follow-up, whereas the control group's scores remained largely stable.

Prior to conducting the repeated measures ANOVA, assumptions were examined and confirmed. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that scores for marital satisfaction and dyadic coping were normally distributed at each time point ( $p > .10$  for all). Levene's test for equality of error variances was non-significant ( $p = .364$  for marital satisfaction;  $p = .441$  for dyadic coping), suggesting homogeneity of variances between groups. Mauchly's test of sphericity was also non-significant for both dependent variables ( $W = 0.961$ ,  $p = .295$  for marital satisfaction;  $W = 0.945$ ,  $p = .218$  for dyadic coping), confirming that the assumption of sphericity was met. These results validated the use of repeated measures ANOVA for analyzing the longitudinal intervention effects.

**Table 2. Repeated Measures ANOVA Summary for Marital Satisfaction and Dyadic Coping**

Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	$\eta^2$
Marital Satisfaction	Time	1021.52	2	510.76	24.81	<.001	.464
	Group	853.47	1	853.47	28.12	<.001	.498
	Time $\times$ Group	914.39	2	457.20	22.27	<.001	.442
	Error	1237.66	56	22.10			
Dyadic Coping	Time	1164.18	2	582.09	26.95	<.001	.490
	Group	771.42	1	771.42	25.61	<.001	.478
	Time $\times$ Group	987.11	2	493.56	23.56	<.001	.457
	Error	1207.39	56	21.56			

As illustrated in Table 2, significant main effects were found for time and group on both marital satisfaction ( $F(2, 56) = 24.81$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .464$ ;  $F(1, 56) = 28.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .498$ ) and dyadic coping ( $F(2, 56) = 26.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .490$ ;  $F(1, 56) = 25.61$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .478$ ). Moreover, significant time  $\times$  group interactions were found for both variables, indicating that the intervention was effective over time and had different effects on the intervention and control groups. Effect sizes ( $\eta^2$ ) were large, confirming practical significance.

**Table 3. Bonferroni Post-Hoc Comparisons for Time Points by Group**

Variable	Group	Comparison	Mean Diff.	SE	p
Marital Satisfaction	Intervention	Pre-test vs. Post-test	10.91	1.52	<.001
		Post-test vs. Follow-up	-2.17	1.09	.047



Dyadic Coping	Control	Pre-test vs. Follow-up	8.74	1.39	<.001
		Pre-test vs. Post-test	0.74	1.08	.512
		Post-test vs. Follow-up	-0.53	0.94	.581
	Intervention	Pre-test vs. Follow-up	0.21	1.06	.847
		Pre-test vs. Post-test	10.14	1.66	<.001
		Post-test vs. Follow-up	-1.52	1.11	.178
	Control	Pre-test vs. Follow-up	8.62	1.47	<.001
		Pre-test vs. Post-test	0.55	1.15	.639
		Post-test vs. Follow-up	-0.27	0.88	.754
		Pre-test vs. Follow-up	0.28	1.06	.791

Table 3 shows Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparisons between time points. In the intervention group, significant increases in marital satisfaction were observed between pre-test and post-test ( $p < .001$ ) and between pre-test and follow-up ( $p < .001$ ), with a mild decrease from post-test to follow-up ( $p = .047$ ). Similar trends were observed for dyadic coping, with a significant increase from pre-test to post-test ( $p < .001$ ) and sustained improvement at follow-up ( $p < .001$ ). The control group did not show significant changes across any time points in either variable.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Emotional Clarity Enhancement Training (ECET) on improving marital satisfaction and dyadic coping among couples. Findings from repeated measures ANOVA revealed significant improvements in both variables in the intervention group compared to the control group across the post-test and five-month follow-up phases. These results underscore the transformative impact of emotional clarity as a trainable skill that can positively influence emotional and relational dynamics within marriage. Notably, the sustained effect observed at follow-up suggests the intervention's long-term utility in fostering relational resilience.

Improvements in marital satisfaction following ECET confirm that emotional clarity facilitates more constructive emotional expression and reduces the risk of emotional miscommunication—a common source of dissatisfaction in couples. Participants in the intervention group reported greater ability to articulate emotional needs and respond empathetically to their partners, contributing to enhanced intimacy, reduced tension, and overall relationship harmony. These findings are in line with previous research that identifies emotional clarity as a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction (Cho & Choi, 2024; Ko & Choi, 2022). For instance, individuals with higher emotional clarity are more likely to engage in emotionally congruent interactions, interpret partner cues accurately, and experience fewer relational misunderstandings (Hwang & Choi, 2025; Puigbó et al., 2019).

Additionally, the observed enhancement in dyadic coping aligns with the theoretical proposition that emotional clarity is foundational for effective stress communication and mutual regulation (Lillie et al., 2021; Ștefănuț et al., 2021). Couples in the intervention group demonstrated greater ability to recognize their own and their partner's stress signals, validate one another's emotions, and engage in coordinated coping efforts. These outcomes mirror findings from recent studies on dyadic coping, where emotionally attuned partners showed increased synchrony in managing relational stressors (Ranieri et al., 2024; Vedelago et al., 2022). Specifically, interventions that integrate emotional awareness with dyadic coping training have been shown to enhance mutual responsiveness and conflict resolution, thereby reducing emotional overload in high-stress scenarios (Colclough et al., 2023; Relvas et al., 2023).

The findings also support existing literature emphasizing the relevance of emotional clarity for couples navigating psychological or situational stress. For example, in couples coping with chronic illness, clarity in emotional communication was shown to buffer relational strain and enhance supportive coping behaviors (Arshad & Bibi, 2020; Crangle, 2021). Similarly,

studies on couples undergoing infertility treatment or cancer caregiving found that clear emotional expression contributed to better dyadic adjustment and lower relational conflict (Grégoire et al., 2021; Molgora et al., 2019). These parallels affirm that emotional clarity is not merely a personal asset but a relational catalyst, capable of transforming how stress is processed within the dyad.

Importantly, the sustained gains at the five-month follow-up suggest that the ECET intervention succeeded in producing lasting changes in emotional regulation habits and interpersonal coping styles. This durability is crucial, given that many relational interventions show rapid decay in effect size post-treatment. Longitudinal studies have suggested that the habitual use of emotional clarity contributes to greater adaptability in relationships over time, reinforcing dyadic stability and emotional connection (Lippold et al., 2024; Paschali et al., 2021). Our findings align with this trajectory, indicating that even brief interventions targeting foundational emotional skills can yield enduring relational benefits.

Gender dynamics and cultural context also warrant consideration in interpreting the results. Prior research has indicated that while women may have higher baseline emotional awareness, men benefit significantly from structured emotional clarity interventions due to historically limited emotional socialization (Macías-Espinoza et al., 2022; Meskó et al., 2022). Observations during the sessions in the current study revealed that male participants initially struggled with emotional labeling but showed marked improvement over time, especially in the dyadic coping tasks. This supports earlier findings that emotionally focused interventions are especially effective when tailored to address emotional inhibition or avoidance (Barden et al., 2024; Vedelago et al., 2022).

Additionally, the training's group-based structure appeared to foster shared learning and mutual modeling, which enhanced engagement and facilitated integration of the material. Couples benefited from vicarious insight as they observed others navigating similar emotional challenges, echoing previous work on collective coping models in relational settings (Ranieri et al., 2024; Relvas et al., 2023). Group settings may also amplify feelings of normalcy and reduce stigma around emotional vulnerability, thus promoting deeper emotional engagement and authentic expression (Merel et al., 2021; Parise et al., 2019).

While emotional clarity was the central focus of the intervention, its impact on dyadic coping highlights the interplay between *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* emotional competencies. Emotional clarity may serve as the psychological infrastructure upon which effective relational coping is constructed. As demonstrated in this study, once individuals can clearly identify and verbalize their emotional states, they become more capable of engaging in emotion-focused dyadic coping behaviors such as empathic listening, validation, and co-regulation (Cho & Choi, 2024; Lippold et al., 2024). This relationship echoes theoretical models emphasizing that emotional intelligence is an essential precursor to relational intelligence.

Another implication of the findings is the observed ripple effect of emotional clarity on other psychosocial outcomes. Although the study focused on marital satisfaction and dyadic coping, anecdotal participant feedback suggested collateral benefits such as reduced reactivity, improved parenting communication, and enhanced workplace interaction. These secondary gains are consistent with prior findings that link emotional clarity to broader domains of psychological functioning and social adaptation (Cheng et al., 2025; Ko & Choi, 2022). Thus, emotional clarity training holds promise not only as a marital intervention but also as a foundational skill with cross-domain applicability.

In synthesis, the current study provides empirical support for incorporating emotional clarity training as a core module in relationship education and couple therapy. As demonstrated, ECET not only enhances relational satisfaction but also fortifies couples' capacity to navigate stress collaboratively, thereby reinforcing emotional resilience and relational continuity.

Despite the encouraging results, this study has several limitations that warrant consideration. First, the relatively small sample size ( $n = 30$ ) limits the generalizability of findings to the broader population. Although the effect sizes observed were substantial and the sample was demographically diverse, replication with larger and more heterogeneous samples is necessary



to validate the outcomes. Second, all data were collected via self-report measures, which are susceptible to social desirability bias and subjective interpretation. Observational or physiological data could provide a more nuanced understanding of emotional clarity in action. Third, the study's reliance on a short intervention period (six sessions) may not fully capture the complexity and variability of emotional development across individuals and relationships. Lastly, while the five-month follow-up provides insight into the durability of the intervention, longer-term tracking is needed to assess whether these improvements are sustained over years and across developmental transitions such as parenthood or aging.

Future research should expand the scope and depth of investigation into emotional clarity as a relational construct. First, comparative studies should examine the effectiveness of emotional clarity training against other modalities such as cognitive-behavioral couple therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, or emotion-focused therapy. Additionally, future trials may benefit from including third-party assessments, such as partner ratings, clinician observations, or behavioral coding of dyadic interactions. Longitudinal studies that span multiple life stages could explore how emotional clarity and dyadic coping evolve across different relational challenges. Moreover, integrating neurobiological and psychophysiological indicators—such as heart rate variability or cortisol responses—could illuminate the embodied processes underlying emotional synchrony and regulation. Finally, culturally adapted versions of ECET should be developed and tested across non-Western contexts to explore the influence of cultural norms on emotional communication and dyadic coping patterns.

In clinical and educational settings, practitioners should consider incorporating emotional clarity training into relationship enrichment programs, premarital counseling, and conflict resolution workshops. Given its foundational nature, emotional clarity may serve as a prerequisite to more advanced relational interventions. Clinicians can use structured tools such as emotion wheels, self-monitoring logs, and guided dialogues to help clients develop awareness of their emotional states. Group-based interventions may offer added value by normalizing emotional challenges and enhancing peer support. Moreover, educators and policymakers could integrate emotional clarity education into school and university curricula to foster relational intelligence from early life stages. As emotional literacy becomes more embedded in public health discourse, its potential to transform relational well-being and social cohesion will become increasingly evident.

### **Declaration of Interest**

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

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### **Authors' Contributions**

All authors equally contributed to this study.

### **Transparency of Data**

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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