

## A Study on the Effects of Enneagram Group Counseling on Nursing Students

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### Abstract

*This research was conducted to examine the effects of enneagram group counseling on the self-consciousness, communication competence, and interpersonal relationship of nursing students. As a research design, this research was performed to a nonequivalent control group pre- and post-test on a total of 20 students, 10 in experimental group and 10 in control group. For the experimental group, enneagram group counseling program, which consists of self-observation, self-exploration and self-understanding, self-change and understanding of others, and self-growth, was carried out in a total of 8 sessions, 2 or 3 times a week for 120 minutes per sessions using self-reflection daily record, education, group activities, presentation, and discussion. The collected data was analyzed by Chi-square test, Fisher's exact test, t-test using SPSS 15.0 program, and the results are as follows: the self-consciousness, communication competence, and interpersonal relationship points of nursing students who participated in the enneagram group counseling program appeared to be significantly higher than those of nursing students who did not. To conclude, it was confirmed that enneagram group counseling program was an effective program for improving the self-consciousness, communication competence, and interpersonal relationship of nursing students. It is considered necessary to support nursing students to grow as professional nurses who have the proper awareness of themselves as well as strong communication competence and interpersonal skills, by using enneagram group counseling as a part of character education that is emphasized to nurses.*

**Keywords:** *Nursing students, Enneagram, Self-consciousness, Communication competence, Interpersonal relationship*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Necessity of Research

University students not only understand themselves and others objectively but also achieve intellectual, affective, and social development through interpersonal relationship. Also, interpersonal relationship is very important as the goal, values, and quality of individual life changes depending on what interpersonal relationship they build and maintain while establishing intimacy with others by widening their interpersonal relationship [1].

Nursing students are specially required to have not only high-advanced professional knowledge and nursing skills but also a strong interpersonal skill, in order to form close relationships with various people when adapting to the clinical environment. It is also essential for them to have a good interpersonal skill during college as they meet diverse people in nursing practice fields before graduation, and such interpersonal relationship has an important influence on their clinical adaptation after they graduate. Furthermore, in order for nursing students to build good interpersonal relationships in society and form

desirable support relationships with nursing clients and patients, having a proper awareness of themselves and communication competence is very important [2, 3].

While there is training for improving the interpersonal skills of nursing students in nursing education, it is still not enough with only a few subjects and is difficult for the students to acquire interpersonal skills within only a few hours of education.

One of the important elements of having a satisfactory interpersonal relationship is communication competence. Communication is the most important factor that determines how one builds relationships with others, and accepts and deals with a certain situation in such relationships [4]. An interpersonal relationship is realized through communication with others, and communication competence to communicate emotionally is needed in order to maintain a satisfactory interpersonal relationship. Also, one should be aware of and understand one's self first in order to have communication for understanding and sympathizing with others.

Self-awareness is one of the important elements of interpersonal relationship, and in order to develop interpersonal relationship, it is important to properly recognize one's emotions and thoughts first. Self-awareness is expressed as "self consciousness" in nursing science, and self-awareness and understanding are covered as important topics in nursing curriculum [5].

Self-consciousness is the tendency of continuously concentrating on one's emotions and thoughts and observing one's own behaviors. That is, self-consciousness is a self-evaluative sentiment that generally appears with the ability of self-awareness and while understanding and evaluating one's behaviors [6]. Park & Kim [7] stated that the self-consciousness of nursing students had a similar positive correlation with communication anxiety, which had a significantly negative correlation with communication competence.

It is inferred that when one instantly realizes arising emotions, motive, and desires by focusing on oneself, he or she can adequately adjust one's demand or assertion in interpersonal relationship based on self-understanding, and can cultivate an ability to cope with and accept emotions that occur naturally during interactions with others [8].

Therefore, continuously being aware of one's own emotions and thoughts and enhancing interpersonal skills based on communication competence are very important for nursing students. This can be helpful for nursing students' social relationships as well as for them to build an efficient interpersonal relationship in the therapeutic relationships with subjects.

It is necessary to understand humans and deeply understand self and others through in-depth insights, in order to form a positive evaluation on self, psychologically stability, and amicable interpersonal relationship, and enneagram enables such process [9].

The purpose of enneagram is to recognize one's own personality type and stop the automatic reactions from the personality type, therefore enabling an individual to regain human nature, not be obsessed with myself of now, escape from fear, and live as a free being [10]. In addition to that, it is a longitudinal tool that helps an individual to understand his or own personality through an integrated view of the entire character from infancy to adult hood, and can be used as a useful tool for developing an in-depth potential according to one's personality type [11].

While there are studies [12, 13, and 14] claiming that an enneagram group counseling program effective for university students' interpersonal relationship, there are none that analyzed the effects of enneagram group counseling on self-consciousness and communication competence.

Thus, this research aims to identify the effects of enneagram group counseling on nursing students' self-consciousness, communication competence and interpersonal relationship, by applying a program about self-observation, self-exploration and self-understanding, self-change and understanding of others, and self-growth on them.

## 1.2. Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to verify the effects of enneagram group counseling on the self-consciousness, communication competence, and interpersonal relationship of nursing students, and the details are as follows.

First, it identifies the effects of enneagram group counseling on nursing students' self-consciousness.

Second, it identifies the effects of enneagram group counseling on nursing students' communication competence.

Third, it identifies the effects of enneagram group counseling on nursing students' interpersonal relationship.

Fourth, it analyzes the activity sheets contents of experimental group.

## 2. Research Method

### 2.1. Research Design

This research is a quasi-experimental research of nonequivalent control group pre- and post-test to verify the effects of enneagram group counseling on the self-consciousness, communication competence, and interpersonal relationship of nursing students.

### 2.2. Research Subjects

This research assigned 10 students taking Therapeutic Communication summer class, among fourth-year students in the Department of Nursing at T University in B, in the experimental group and randomly selected 10 other fourth-year students from the Department of Nursing in the same university as the control group. It collected data from June 23rd to July 11th 2014. For ethical considerations, research subjects were explained the purpose and method of research, were guaranteed to maintain the confidentiality of their privacy and anonymity, and were informed that they can stop participating in the program at any time they wanted, followed by their written consent during the data collection.

### 2.3. Research Tool

#### 2.3.1. Korean Enneagram Personality Type Indicator

The enneagram personality type test tool used in this research was Korean Enneagram Personality Type Indicator (KEPTI) developed by Youn [15]. This test is composed of a total of 81 questions including 9 questions for each of the 9 personality types, and type 1 is called reformer, type 2 helper, type 3 achiever, type 4 artist, type 5 thinker, type 6 loyalist, type 7 optimist, type 8 leader, and type 9 mediator. This test had Cronbach's  $\alpha = .90$  and re-test reliability .89.

#### 2.3.2. Self-consciousness

In order to measure self-consciousness, the self-consciousness scale developed by Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss [16] and adapted by Kim [17] was used. Self-consciousness scale is for finding out the tendency of continuously paying attention to self, and consists of questions that ask how one usually thinks about oneself.

Each question is based on Likert-type scale of 5 points, from 'strongly disagree' at 1 point to 'strongly agree' at 5 points, was composed of 3 sub-criteria including private self-consciousness (10 questions), public self-consciousness (7 questions), and social anxiety (6 questions), and the higher the points were the higher that one's self-consciousness was. This research only used 10 questions of private self-consciousness. The reliability of the tool had Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$  in Kim [17]'s research and Cronbach's  $\alpha = .81$  in this research.

### **2.3.3. Communication Competence**

In order to measure communication competence, this research applied Hur [19]'s comprehensive interpersonal communication competence scale, which was the revised form of Rubin [18]'s Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale (ICCS) to fit Korean sentiment. This tool had 15 sub-factors of an individual's communication competence, including self-disclosure, empathy, social relaxation, assertiveness, concentration, interaction management, expressiveness, supportiveness, immediacy, efficiency, social appropriateness, conversational coherence, goal detection, responsiveness, and noise control.

This tool was based on Likert-type scale of 5 points from 'strongly agree' at 1 point to 'strongly disagree' at 5 points. Each factor was composed of one statement, and the higher the points were the higher that one's communication competence was. The reliability of this tool had Cronbach's  $\alpha=.83$  when it was developed by Hur [19] and was Cronbach's  $\alpha=.80$  in this research.

### **2.3.4. Interpersonal Relationship**

For measuring interpersonal relationship, Relationship Change Scale developed by Guerny [20] and adapted by Moon [21] was used. This tool has a total of 25 questions, with each question based on a 5-point criterion and consisting of 7 sub-factors including satisfaction, communication, trust, intimacy, sensitivity, openness, and understanding, and the higher the points were, the more positive one's interpersonal relationship was. The reliability of the tool had Cronbach's  $\alpha=.86$  in Guerny [20]'s research and Cronbach's  $\alpha=.89$  in this research.

## **2.4. Research Procedures**

This research was performed from June 23rd to July 11th, in the order of pre-test, experiment, and post-test. The purpose and program of this research was explained to the experimental group on June 23rd, the pre-test on the self-consciousness, communication competence, and interpersonal relationship of the group was carried out, and the post-test was conducted right after the last program on July 11th. Meanwhile, a pre-test and post-test on the self-consciousness, communication competence, and interpersonal relationship of control group who did not participate in the program were conducted.

The enneagram group counseling used in this research was based on enneagram-related literature [22, 23, and 24] and data from Korea Enneagram Education Research Institute. The main contents were composed of self-observation, self-exploration and self-understanding, self-change and understanding of others, and self-growth. The group counseling was conducted for a total of 8 times, 2 or 3 times a week and 120 minutes per session, using methods such as self-reflection daily record, education, group activities, presentation, and discussion.

### **2.4.1. Self-observation**

The self-observation phase was carried out in 1 session for 2 hours. It introduced the program and enneagram, conducted a pre-test and enneagram personality type test, and involved a self-introduction time. Also, it made the research participants have self-observation for 5 minutes when they wake up every morning, by recalling their memory every 24 hours as an assignment, and write down self-reflection daily record every day until the program ended.

### **2.4.2. Self-exploration and Self-understanding**

The self-exploration and self-understanding held throughout 3 sessions for 6 hours. In session 2, the results of enneagram personality type test were handed out to the

participating students to check their personality type. Then they were explained the characteristics of 3 central strengths of enneagram, were made to check the center of their strengths, write down the behavioral features related to the center of their strength through activity sheets, and took turns presenting them. In session 3, they were made to identify their characteristics through the explanation of 9 personality types and wings as well as activity sheets. In this phase, they were asked to find and face their passion through self-exploration, and admit and accept their characteristics objectively. In session 4, they were explained the characteristics and development level of disintegration · integration for a more accurate self-understanding, in order for them to identify their disintegration · integration condition and development level; then they were asked to write down and present their reactions during stress.

#### **2.4.3. Self-change and Understanding of Others**

The self-change and understanding of others phase was held for a total of 6 hours. In session 5, the virtue and vice per personality type were explained to the students who were then made to identify their virtue and vice. By conjecturing what influence their virtue and vice had on surrounding people and the personality types of others, they discussed the ways to build and maintain an amicable interpersonal relationship. In session 6, they wrote down their conflict experiences related to their communication characteristics and communication on activity sheets, figured out the difference of communication type between their own type and other types. Finally, in session 7, they freely talked about and shared each of their experiences regarding conflicts in interpersonal relationship through the activity sheets on past interpersonal relationship experiences. This phase started from self-change and addressed the process of understanding others.

#### **2.4.4. Self-growth**

The self-growth phase was carried out for 2 hours. Research subjects were explained the rearing attitude of parents and were made to write down their emotional and sentimental relationship toward parents. Then, they were asked to write down and present their own 5 promises and 5 other promises of declaring their visions while imagining themselves 10 years later. Through this process, they could learn the fundamental drive that formed their personality and could be aware of their higher potential, by looking at positive elements of themselves. Lastly, the program ended with writing a reflection paper on program participation and taking a post survey.

#### **2.5. Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using SPSS/WIN 15.0. First, the general characteristics of experimental group and control group and the pre-homogeneity test on self-consciousness, communication competence, and interpersonal relationship were analyzed by Chi-square test, Fisher's exact test, and t-test. Second, the average difference of the pre and post-test of experimental group and control group was analyzed by t-test for hypothesis test. In addition, a part of the activity sheets used during the group counseling for experimental group was analyzed.

### **3. Research Results**

#### **3.1. Homogeneity Test on General Characteristics**

There were a total of 20 subjects in this research, including 10 in experimental group and 20 in control group. In the homogeneity test on the general characteristics of subjects

in the experimental and control groups, there was no significant difference in their satisfaction toward major, academic achievement, and leadership experience (Table 1).

**Table 1. Homogeneity Test on General Characteristics**

(N=20)

Characteristics	Categories	Experimental	Control	$\chi^2$	p
		group (n=10)	group (n=10)		
		n (%)	n (%)		
Religion*	Yes	2 (20.0)	6 (60.0)	3.33	.170
	No	8 (80.0)	4 (40.0)		
Satisfaction toward major*	Satisfied	3 (30.0)	6 (60.0)	1.82	.370
	Moderate	7 (70.0)	4 (40.0)		
	Unsatisfied	0 (-)	0 (-)		
Academic achievement*	Upper	1 (10.0)	3 (30.0)	1.29	.700
	Middle	6 (60.0)	5 (50.0)		
	Lower	3 (30.0)	2 (20.0)		
Leadership experience*	Many	1 (10.0)	2 (20.0)	.94	.714
	Moderate	4 (40.0)	5 (50.0)		
	Little	5 (50.0)	3 (30.0)		

\*Fisher's exact test

### 3.2. Homogeneity Test on Dependent Variables

The results of the homogeneity test on the pre-test points of the experimental and control groups demonstrated that both groups were homogeneous, as their points of self-consciousness, communication competence, and interpersonal relationship had no statistically significant difference Table 2.

**Table 2. Homogeneity Test on Dependent Variables**

(N=20)

Variables	Experimental	Control	t	p
	group (n=10)	group (n=10)		
	M (SD)	M (SD)		
Self-consciousness	34.50 (3.81)	36.00 (3.56)	-2.53	.343
Communication competence	50.40 (4.30)	54.60 (3.03)	-.91	.830
Interpersonal relationship	91.70 (9.62)	91.60 (14.82)	.02	.308

### 3.3. Self-consciousness

The self-consciousness points of experimental group who participated in the enneagram group counseling increased by 6.70 points and control group by 0.20, showing that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups ( $t=4.88$ ,  $p=.000$ ) (Table 3).

### 3.4. Communication Competence

The communication competence point of experimental group who participated in the enneagram group counseling increased by 16.70 points and control group by 2.90, indicating that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups ( $t=11.10$ ,  $p=.000$ ) (Table 3).

### 3.5. Interpersonal Relationship

The interpersonal relationship point of experimental group who participated in the enneagram group counseling increased by 15.00 points and control group by 0.70, signifying that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups ( $t=4.26, p=.000$ ) (Table 3).

**Table 3. Effects of Enneagram Group Counseling Program**

(N=20)

Variables	Groups	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference	t	P
		M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)		
Self-consciousness	Exp.	34.50 (3.81)	41.20 (2.10)	6.70 (3.86)	4.88	.000
	Cont.	36.00 (3.56)	36.20 (2.90)	0.20 (1.69)		
Communication competence	Exp.	50.40 (4.30)	67.10 (2.51)	16.70 (3.62)	11.10	.000
	Cont.	54.60 (3.03)	57.50 (3.63)	2.90 (1.99)		
Interpersonal relationship	Exp.	91.70 (9.62)	106.70 (7.32)	15.00 (9.50)	4.26	.000
	Cont.	91.60 (14.82)	92.30 (15.38)	0.70 (4.76)		

### 3.6. Content Analysis of Activity Sheets

In order to improve the effects of enneagram group counseling, activity sheets was used for each counseling session. There was a total of 14 activity sheets, which was composed of the following: self-introduction, behavioral features related to the center of strength, features related to personality type, analysis of one's condition and characteristics, reaction during stress, inference of other people's personality type, communication characteristics, conflict experience related to communication, interpersonal relationship experience, life curve, the dominant emotions on parents and emotional relationship, my promise, declaration of visions, and reflection paper on program participation. Each counseling session also involved a discussion with an activity sheets that fit each session.

In the content analysis of activity sheets, 'My Promise for Improving Interpersonal Relationship' and 'Declaration of Visions' were proposed by each enneagram personality type (Table 4) (Table 5). The enneagram personality type of research subjects had 1 person for each of type 1, 2, 4, and 7, 2 people for type 6, and 4 people for type 9.

**Table 4. Content Analysis of Activity Sheets(1)**

Enneagram personality type	My promises for improving interpersonal relationship
1	-I will think that others are also right and not only am I right.
	-I will listen carefully to others with an open mind.
	-I will love others without any strings attached.
	-I will treat others softly and listen to them well when they complain.
	-I will think from the others' shoes instead of disagreeing with their opinions.
2	-I will greet others first.
	-I will express my emotions and desire.
	-I will ask others for what I need.
	-I will not expect too much from others.
4	-I will not be too conscious of others and be faithful to my emotions.
	-I will not treat comfortable and close people in a rude way.
	-I will not talk about a situation in a pessimistic way.
	-I will calm myself down and solve problems rationally even when I am angry.
	-I will think and behave by putting myself in another person's shoes.
	-I will not be late for appointments.

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I will talk more concretely with confidence.</li> <li>-I will not be indecisive, trust myself, and decide.</li> <li>-I will not ask repeated questions to confirm on decided facts.</li> <li>-I will not assume or misunderstand others` words or behaviors.</li> <li>-I will not criticize others because they are different from what I think.</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I will try to put myself from the shoes of others.</li> <li>-I will not judge others with my own experience.</li> <li>-I will have patience.</li> <li>-I will listen carefully to other people.</li> <li>-I will appropriate claim my thoughts.</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I will precisely express my intention instead of holding back when I am angry.</li> <li>-I will listen to others carefully and show an adequate reaction.</li> <li>-I will precisely express my desire to others.</li> <li>-I will work hard to be familiarized with others easily.</li> <li>-I will not have prejudice.</li> </ul>

**Table 5. Content Analysis of Activity Sheets (2)**

Enneagram personality type	Declaration of visions
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I will enjoy the present at ease and keep my own promise.</li> <li>-I will not criticize and become an example for others.</li> <li>-I will realize the meaning of sufficiency than shortage.</li> <li>-I will become a person who knows how to forgive myself.</li> <li>-I will encourage a person who has made a mistake.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I will treat others with a sincere heart and not false heart.</li> <li>-I will claim my desire rightfully.</li> <li>-I will emulate the strengths of others and carry them out.</li> <li>-I will focus on myself instead of paying attention to others.</li> <li>-I will love but not be possessive.</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I will feel proud of my work and get recognized by others around me.</li> <li>-I will thoroughly manage myself with a sound body and mental health.</li> <li>-I will directly challenge myself instead of merely worrying.</li> <li>-I will become a person needed in society.</li> <li>-I will work hard to become a capable person in my field.</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I will not be anxious about my decision and have trust in myself.</li> <li>-I will directly encounter and experience instead of judging in advance.</li> <li>-I will think of the future instead of blaming others or obsessing over the past.</li> <li>-I will not doubt others and accept them as they are.</li> <li>-I will try to experience new things instead of only doing familiar things.</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I will live a healthy life instead of living by my impulse.</li> <li>-I will not live without a goal and will live a rewarding life.</li> <li>-I will remove negative thoughts and think positively.</li> <li>-I will live a life of volunteering for others.</li> <li>-I will strive more specifically to become myself I want.</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I will handle everything faithfully and will not procrastinate.</li> <li>-I will not be passive and live with an active attitude.</li> <li>-I will have patient and act as a mediator.</li> <li>-I will not rely on others and cultivate leadership.</li> <li>-I will be sensitive on my desire and behave immediately for what I want.</li> </ul>



#### 4. Discussion

This research conducted 8 sessions of group counseling for 16 hours in order to examine the effects of enneagram group counseling on nursing students' self-consciousness, communication competence and interpersonal relationship. The enneagram group counseling on nursing students demonstrated that the self-consciousness point increased by significance difference compared to before intervention. It is difficult to make a direct comparison since there are no previous studies that investigated the effects of enneagram group counseling on self-consciousness. However, this result is similar to a research [25] proving that enneagram program had effects on male high school students' self-understanding, and a research [26] result showing that the self-understanding of general people improved through an enneagram group workshop. Enneagram group counseling was helpful to pay attention to self, properly recognize one's emotions and thoughts, and accept and understand oneself as he/she is.

In the effects of enneagram group counseling on communication competence, the communication competence point of experimental group increased by 16.70 points, showing a statistically significant difference. This corresponds to a previous study [27] that enneagram communication education program for parents brought a positive effect on the communication competence of parents. This indicates that enneagram group counseling improved the participants' communication competence by the experience of being considerate for and understanding others, through the conversations by personality type and the activities of dividing one's communication characteristics and communication conflict experiences.

In terms of the effects of enneagram group counseling on interpersonal relationship, the interpersonal relationship point increased by significant difference before the mediation. This corresponds to a previous study [28] claiming that an enneagram group counseling for university students improved their interpersonal relationship, and other previous studies [26, 29] that enneagram group counseling for general people brought a positive effect on their interpersonal relationship. These results indicate that the understanding of virtue and vice for each enneagram personality type and focus of interest per type allowed the research subjects to view others' emotions and behaviors objectively, and that having an opportunity of sharing, sympathizing with, and supporting the experience of conflicts in interpersonal relationship had an influence on enhancing interpersonal relationship. In other words, enneagram group counseling had an effect on improving interpersonal relationship based on self-understanding through others as well as understanding and embracing others through group activities.

The contents of 'My Promises for Improving Interpersonal Relationship' and 'Declaration of Visions by Imagining Myself of 10 Years from Now' in the activity sheets of subjects demonstrated that they were properly understanding the characteristics of their personality type. Also, through the activity sheets, they could figure out the conversation method they should fix, promises for improving interpersonal relationship, and future visions for self-growth.

Through the above results, enneagram group counseling was proved to be effective for improving nursing students' self-consciousness, communication competence and interpersonal relationship, by enabling them to experientially observe and explore themselves, gain understanding of self as well as others, and achieve self-change and growth in group dynamics.

Although this research had a limitation as there was a few number of research subjects and the mediation was implemented over a short period time for 8 sessions, it has significance as it determined that enneagram group counseling was effective for nursing students' self-consciousness, communication competence and interpersonal relationship.

One of the important duties of a university is to produce prepared and competent people through systematic education for them to carry out adaptive interpersonal

relationship, and students need help from a university education environment instead of training themselves individually [30]. Therefore, it is necessary to execute an enneagram group counseling more systematically by integrating in to the curriculum of nursing universities.

## 5. Conclusion

This research conducted 8 sessions of enneagram group counseling in a total of 16 hours for nursing students in a university. As a result, it could confirm that there were more significant effects for the self-consciousness, communication competence, and interpersonal relationship of experimental group than the control group. In addition, this research could check the subjects' own promises for improving their interpersonal relationship and future visions through activity sheets.

The enneagram group counseling was helpful for improving the communication competence and enhancing the interpersonal skills of nursing students, who needed to have the correct awareness of themselves, communication competence, and interpersonal skills, by enabling them to understand and accept themselves and others.

As part of character education that is emphasized for nurses, it is necessary to use enneagram group counseling for nursing students to grow as professional nurses who have communication competence and interpersonal skills.

Based on the results of this research, the following proposals are made.

First, it is necessary to develop and apply a differentiated enneagram group counseling program for improving communication and interpersonal relationship.

Second, an interrupted time-series design is needed to identify the continuous effects of enneagram group counseling, and a qualitative research is needed to complement the limits of quantitative tool when measuring the effects of enneagram.

Third, a specific program should be developed in order to increase the development level of each personality type in enneagram.

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