

# Influence of Self-Emotional Regulation on Explosive Disorder Among Female Inmates Towards Male Partner in Selected Women Prisons, Kenya

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to evaluate the influence of cognitive restructuring strategies on female inmates with mental disorders related to intermittent explosive disorder towards male partners in selected women prisons in Kenya. The study helped to evaluate the influence of inmates' emotional response control towards male partners. The study was anchored on Social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura and self-evaluation maintenance theory by Abraham Tesser. The study used an Ex Post Facto research design. The study was carried out at Langata and Thika Women Prisons. Quantitative data was obtained from the sampled inmates using questionnaires; while qualitative data was collected using interview guides from the prison key informants. The study incorporated 8 constables, 4 counsellors, 3 chaplains as key informants. Stratified and proportionate simple random sampling was used to select a sample size of 307 inmates. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential tests. Hypotheses were tested at  $p=.05$  using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically according to the study objectives. The study results indicated that there was a statistically non-significant negative relationship between emotional regulation and intermittent explosive disorder, [ $r(257) = -.059, p = .347$ ]. This demonstrates that an increase in intensity of emotional regulation indicators: self-awareness, modulating response, response to emotions, led to a decrease in severity of intermittent explosive disorder indicators: rage, irritability, racing thoughts, violence, aggression, yelling, intimidation. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there was no statistical influence of emotional regulation on intermittent explosive disorder among female inmates' violence towards male partner in selected women prisons, Kenya is rejected.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Restructuring, Emotional Regulation, Intermittent Explosive and Disorder Female Inmates.

## 1. Introduction

Women's Intermittent Explosive Disorder (IED), among various communities, families have long been dismissed as a ridicule; non-effective and as hysterical state of expression especially towards men. Women's IED takes place when one is unable to control aggressive impulses resulting into assaultive crime in a relationship. (Mati, 2022, citing Banarjee et. al.; 2014) on women criminality; indicated that the role of the

criminal justice societal norms influenced women to be victims not perpetrators despite engagement and execution of crimes in the society. Although both genders experience provocative anger which may result to violence, many societies consider females' anger as culturally unacceptable; while men repressed anger outburst is seen as normal under all circumstances. Women's level of rage, irritability, and the speed of racing thoughts to react violently towards men, lacking emotion control; alter the way of viewing risks and underestimating chances of bad outcome (Coccaro & Lee, 2020).

Influence of CRS on emotional control and behaviour change was also studied by Omopo (2021), in Ibadan Nigeria, on the promotion of COVID-19 awareness and health behaviour; to adjust to new normal behaviour. The study found that individuals who practiced self-monitoring, emotional control in behaviour were able to manage positive thoughts, feeling to overcome the impact of epidemic in the society. This enhances good health practically analyzed the magnitude of the problem, adopted to new habits of life through hands washing, use of masks, social distancing and emotional control. This effectively controlled COVID-19 infections among families and public places. Accordingly, the participants exercised personal thought reframing, self-monitoring, and emotional regulation to maintain responsible behaviour to avert spread of the pandemic in the society.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Violence is a pre-eminent evil of the postmodern era with loss of lives and property due to lack of individual thought reframing, emotional control, and self-monitoring in partner relationships behaviour. Women outbursts, anger, and violence associated with impulsive aggressive episodes; characteristics traits of IED have caused immense destruction of property and loss of lives in Kenya. In a recent Kenya Demographic and Health Survey KDHS (2022), 36% of men in Kenya have experienced emotional, economic and psychological or sexual violence from their female partners. When men are subjected to women violence, they develop repressed attributes which

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negatively affect mental health, family wellbeing and destabilization of family set ups in the society. Women in Kenya make up 18% of prison population accounting for 4% of serious female violent crimes. Imprisonment of female inmates deny many children the benefits of motherhood and livelihood (KPCS, 2022). The use of cognitive strategies in various institutions to instill women mental sobriety by controlling women impulsive violence in partner relationship would be necessary. Some news headlines reports have presented a worrying trend of women impulsive violence on property destruction; murder of male partners in Kenya.

### 3. Literature Review

#### A. Emotional Regulation

According to Lane and Smith (2021) emotional regulation starts at infancy as children and parents interact, allowing the children to explore the environment around them.

Children acquire cognitive abilities to overcome emotional torments and adjust to fit in the cultural and societal norms. Emotional regulation is an internal process allowing individuals to modify, monitor and evaluate the intensity of the moment perceptions. Therefore, emotion regulation operates within social, cognitive, biological and behavioral processes to achieve intrapersonal and personal emotions in relationships (Lennarz *et al.*, 2019; Stifter & Augustine (2019). Emotional awareness is the basis of emotional self-regulation, managing social situations, calmness of the mind, maintain and enjoy relationships. However, Lane and Smith, (2021), indicated that higher emotional awareness is also associated with levels of anxiety disorder; this may interfere with goal directed cognition towards others. Therefore, higher levels of emotion regulation greater levels of health, happiness or life satisfaction that one finds from a partner in relationship. Low levels of emotions lack the will to achieving concern for others; leading to loneliness and despair (Veilleux *et al.* 2022).

According to Ghasedi (2019), individuals experience emotion regulation consciously and unconsciously. The ability requires rethinking, challenging situations to reduce anger, anxiety or violence to focus on happiness and comfort. Use of cognitive behaviour through mindfulness therapy, is important in controlling emotions to provide reciprocal reactions of expressing mutual empathy towards other people and situations (Stifter & Augustin, 2019). Mindfulness therapy decrease stress, rumination creating self-awareness, forgiveness and attention for capacity to regulate emotions, and improve relationships. However, there is a connection between concealing feelings and loss of emotion control, violence and verbal aggression. For example, prisoners suppress their emotions; but the conscious mind reminds them of their past life, family, love, haters and a desired future. This suppression reappears as violence, anger, guilt and frustrations during incarceration. Positive emotions are not easy to maintain in prison environment, they are misconstrued as coping mechanism. (Chimicz, Lewiecka-Zelent & Lisiecka, 2023).

According to Nelson-Jones (2022), emotional regulation therapy in a relationship, provides forbearance with feelings of

letting go and moving forward, forgiving, for the wellbeing of the partners. However, when emotional regulation forbearance is over emphasized, this negatively affects the relationship.

Yakeley and Meloy (2021), adds that emotional self-control is unconsciously used every day to overcome difficult situations and stress in life. Emotions may be used positively or negatively depending on the situations. For example, in the presences of an aggressor; to avoid confrontation, one may meditate, look away or give a smile to avoid injury, frustrations or damage. Use of cognitive strategies is necessary to suppress overwhelming emotions in a situation.

According to DSM-5, intermittent explosive disorder behaviour is displayed by negative emotions, characterized by aggressive behavior and outbursts motivated by sudden uncontrollable destructive behaviour. This diagnostic criteria for IED concurs with a study conducted by Patoilo, Berman and Coccaro (2021), on negative emotions. The study established that participants with IED were significantly related to prolonged episodes of aggression leading to crimes such as murder, assault, robbery and property destruction. Studies carried out by Rakesh, Allen, Whittle (2023), to investigate gender emotions among men and women, men report more powerful emotions, for example, anger, pride, contempt through body language and facial muscles. Women on the other hand, internalize negative emotions such as sadness guilt and fear (Rakesh *et al.*, 2023; Ghasedi, 2019) adds that women emotions related to anger, violence starts at early adolescence.

Symptoms of expressively signs of intermittent depression, anxiety distress, and internalized negative emotions such as sadness, guilty, fear capitalize the youthful and adulthood age depending on the social life situations.

According to studies by (West & Fredrickson; 2020; Ching & Chan, 2020) positive emotions are a source of new ways of thinking; problem solving, relaxation and mindfulness. Positive psychology analyses two types of emotions: positive emotions broadens peoples' thoughts to build enduring physical, psychological and intellectual abilities for effective functioning. This sets a feeling of happiness, a flow of life and contentment in life. Negative emotions such as hatred, jealous, sadness, fear, weaken the immune system, leading to mental health problems.

Ford and Troy (2019), adds that emotions are experienced as coping mechanism to control an active thought or behaviour in various situations. To cope with negative emotions different strategies are used. For example, use of cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression, situation selection and response modulation alter emotional regulation in different situations. This concurs with Allen and Windsor (2019), on the influence of age as a determinant of the level of emotion regulation. Although old adults exhibit low cognitive domains, cognitive control is associate with successful emotional regulation in late adulthood.

According to Rad, *et al.*, (2024), IED is characterized by deficit of emotional self-control regulation, behavioral inhibitions and emotional interference. Deficit of emotion regulation is also seen in social information processing, interpretation of social stimuli, rumination, and poor

performance hindering individual ability to effectively attend to daily routine.

According to a study by Cocco (2019), participants identified with IED reported symptoms of negative emotions such as: sadness, fear, anger and embarrassment, lack psychosocial functioning and promoting unhealthy relationships too regularly. Maciantowicz and Zajenkovks (2020), concurred with Cocco (2019), that narcissistic personality traits are linked to neuroticism and poor emotion regulation with frequent experience of anxiety, depression and frustration; resulting to poor relationships.

(Krizan & Johar 2024; Michinov E & Michinov N.2022) asserts that deficit of emotional intelligent play a role in aggressive emotions. Low intelligent individuals are unable to manage strong emotions, lack reappraisal and decision making. Low intelligent individuals also process small responses which are related to aggressive behaviour in relationship. High intelligent individuals are perceived as less aggressive, more altruistic and appreciating. Emotional regulation therapy engages emotion strategies such as; physical exercise, mediation, mindfulness, stress management and journaling to diffuse negative thoughts and establish healthy relationships. Negative emotions prompt distress, anxiety maladjusted behaviour and lack of interest in physical or social activities (Zou, Wang, Herold *et al.*,2023).

Brewer *et al.*, (2022), carried a study on emotion recognition of facial responses among autistic and non-autistic individuals; autistic participants were slower in recognizing different types of facial emotions; modulation of emotion response and situation modification. However, the study indicated that despite the lower interception of emotions, the autistic could realize, recognize, redefine and regulate emotions. Therefore, the study found there was no deficient in response to emotional regulation among autistic compared to the non-autistic individuals. This means emotional regulation is cognitive managed through feelings, thoughts and actions in a particular situation(Hadi *et al.*, 2023).

According to Walker, Pinkus, Olderbak *et al.* (2024), in partner relationships, the role of emotion modulation may not be underestimated. Partners in a relationship use emotional modulation to express feelings and thoughts in appreciation of each other. To modulate, self-awareness is paramount to allow listening, emotional intelligent and positive emotions to distract any painful memories in the relationship.

However, Luminet *et al.* (2021) asserts that emotional dysregulation plays a role in the service of life goals and values in a relationship. Symptom of dysregulation include; anger, jealous, anxiety, outburst, impulsivity and mood swings. Dysregulation emotions in a relationship plays the role of avoiding close mutual relationship; fears of emotion involvement, dependence, and self-disclosure to the partner. In a related study Sel Reis, Randall *et al.* (2021) concurs that people who underregulate anger and other emotions in a relationship may be more likely behave aggressively, attempting to restore, dismiss or avoid uncomfortable emotional situations in the relationship. Over regulation of emotions may also lead to aggressive behaviour characterized

by negative effects in behaviour. This reduces decision making process and increasing psychological arousal, diminish commitment, hindering the resolution of difficult situations in a relationship. Luminet *et al.* (2021), adds that the presence of alexithymia in a relationship affects emotion regulation by practicing emotional suppression, giving way to other maladaptive behaviour in a relationship.

Kozubal, Szuster and Wielgopalan (2023), through a study examined the impact of adaptive emotion regulation in relationships. Regulation of emotions positively affect the physical and mental health quality of life of partners in a relationship. Through recognizing, realizing, reframing thought and emotions offers opportunity to downplay problems, and comfortably manage situations in a relationship.

Dysregulation of emotions in relationship is manifested by outbursts, mood anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and hopelessness. This may lead to cognitive dissonance, poor cognitive judgment in view of the relationship a consequence of anger, violence are characteristic of IED.

(Siegel (2024), concurs that developing self - awareness of the present moment in a relationship improves wellbeing and hampers anger, and ruminations. Use of meditation to manage stress and attain attentional focus on the required target thought in a relationship, create amicable solutions. LeBlanc (2020), also examined the importance of using emotional regulations towards interpersonal relations in the environment. Cognitive reappraisal technique such as expressive writing, self-talk and mindfulness are used to decrease emotional suppression, cognitive reconsideration of issues, decreased worry, depression, and increased life satisfaction.

Sun and Nolan (2021), reviewed the role of emotion regulation between different cultures. Mauss, Butler, Roberts and Chu (2010), on response to anger provocation on two cultures, studied Asian-American and European-American individuals on anger provocation and emotion regulation. Results of the study indicated that AA participants responded to anger provocation; expressing emotions openly; while the European American participants responded by showing pent up emotions when overcome with feelings of negative emotions. The findings of the study suggested that strategies of emotional regulation are guided by cultural, attachment styles and environmental factors.

According to a study by Zhang *et al.* (2022) emotional regulations are based on cultural practices, motivational factors, cognitive and individual personality traits. Further the study asserted that individuals with extroverted personality are more likely to use cognitive reappraisal, while individuals with low self-efficacy, experience helplessness in using emotional regulation strategies.

In another study, Brewer *et al.* (2020), found that expressive suppression of facial expression and controlling of positive and negative emotions was affected by increasing arousal anxiety, stress and maladjusted behaviour. Unrestrained emotions facilitate positive emotions, mindfulness, and ability to regulate intense physiological arousal. However, according to Tull, Vidana, and Betts (2020) use of expressive suppression on emotions decrease use of cognitive reappraisal; men use

avoidant emotion regulation to inhibit emotions. For example, combat military men with post trauma memories and related thoughts use expressive suppression emotion; to avoid any trauma related cues. Dysregulation of emotions is associated with stress and mental disorders with low tolerance for frustrations and adversities. Brewer et al, (2020), also asserts that men reappraise emotions less often than do women. However, according to a recent study done by Hadi et al. (2023), on the role of self-awareness in emotional regulation; women increase the intensity of control impulses, feelings and adapt to changing circumstances more than men. Emotional regulations are determined by examining the level of mental concentration, cognitive appraisal and response modulation in behaviour .

Yakeley, (2021) on partner relationship violence, highlights the importance of individual emotional self-control to overcome difficult situations and distress in relationship. Emotions may be used positively or negatively depending on the situations. It is paramount create harmony in violent partner relationship. For example, in the presences of an aggressor; to avoid confrontation: one may keep quiet, meditate, walk away or give a smile to avoid encounter of aggression from the opponent. Such emotions, are cognitive strategies to create a harmony by suppressing overwhelming emotions in a situation.

#### 4. Methodology

Mixed methodology was adopted to guide the collection and analyzing of quantitative and qualitative data in the study. An Ex Post facto research design was used in this study because the independent variable Cognitive Restructuring Strategies (CRS) and the dependent variable Intermittent Explosive Disorder (IED) are already manifested in the inmates. The researcher conducted the study in two women prisons in Kenya, Langata and Thika women prisons, Kenya. The study selected 30% of the population into the sample. Kothari (2009) proposed that 10-30% of a population is reliable for a study. Convenience sampling was used by the researcher to recruit the key informants, this was according to the duty roster of the day. Data collection tools for the study were questionnaire for the inmates and an interview schedule for the prison constable, chaplains and counsellors. Piloting of research questionnaires for the inmates was conducted at Minimum Risk Level Women Prison in Langata, Kenya. The data collection instruments were a questionnaire for the sampled female inmates. The questionnaire gathered information on independent and dependent variables indicators according to the study objectives. The data was cleaned and coded in MS Excel 2016 then exported into SPSS version 26 (SPSS-26) for analysis. Descriptive and inferential analysis were carried out in SPSS. Categorical variables were summarized as frequencies and corresponding percentages. The researcher sought approval from the school of Social Sciences, Mount Kenya University through Department of Psychology, Humanities and Languages to allow the researcher to get ethical clearance from Mount Kenya University Review Committee.

## 5. Results and Findings

### A. Descriptive Analysis of the Emotional Regulation Scale

The findings on responses on items in the emotional regulation scale (Appendix III – Part E) are discussed in this sub-section. The measurement was on a 5-Point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agreed to strongly agree.

In analysis of this scale, a no response has been added as the 6th point in the Likert scale. The responses in percentages are presented in Table 1.

#### *Emotional Regulation Response:*

*Key:*

SD - Strongly Disagree

D - Disagree

N - Neutral

A - Agree

SA - Strongly Agree

NR - No Response

Regarding emotional regulation scale, the following were the responses:

On item I change the subject in my thoughts when I want to feel more positive emotions like :0.4 % had no response. On another item I keep my emotions to myself calmly I self-talk4.7% strong disagreed, 2.8 % disagreed; 16.7 % were neutral, 33.9 % agreed, 29.6 % strongly agreed, while 2.3 % had no response. With regard to change negative emotions to hurting my feelings3.5 % strongly disagreed, 7.4 % disagreed, 13.2 % were neutral, 47.1 % agreed, 26.1 % agreed while 2.7 % had no response. Concerning item: I always keep my positive emotions to myself 13.2 % strongly disagreed, 11.7% disagreed, 15.6 % were neutral, 35.8 % agreed, 21.8 % strongly agreed, 1.9 % had no response. On item: In case I have stressing issues, I meditate to keep calm5.8 % strongly disagreed; 10.9 % disagreed, 37.0 % agreed, 33.1 % strongly agreed, while 2.7 % had no response with reference to item: I walk away from hurting situations 5.1 % strongly disagreed, 12.8 % disagreed 12.8 % were neutral, 29.6 % agreed, 38.5 % strongly agreed; 1.2 % had no response. On item: I change the way of thinking about an issue by thinking positively 5.4 % strongly disagreed; 6.2 % disagreed; 13.6 % were neutral; 41.6 % agreed; 33.1 % strongly agreed. As for item: changing the way I think of my situation makes me control my emotions 3.9% strongly disagreed; 5.4 % disagreed; 13.2 % were neutral, 37.4 % agreed, 37.4 % strongly agreed, 2.7 % had no response. Regarding item on: I always avoid keeping negative emotions to myself7.8 % strong disagreed, 9.7 % disagreed, 16.0 % were neutral, 37.7 % agreed, 28.4% strongly agreed, 0.4 % had no responses Regarding item I accept emotions as they come sort them, change my way of thinking of my situations. 7.0 % strongly disagreed; 8.2 % disagreed, 11.7 % were neutral, 37.7 % agreed, 33.9 % strongly agreed, 1.6 % had no response.

Analysis of self-monitoring indicators was done on self-awareness, modulating response and response to emotions using percentages and counts and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1  
Emotional regulation response (%)

Statement	SD		D		N		A		SA		NR		Total
	f	%	F	%	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	
I change the subject in my thoughts when I want to feel more positive	22	8.6	19	7.4	37	14.4	103	40.1	75	29.2	1	0.4	257
I keep my emotions to myself, calmly I 'self-talk'	12	4.7	33	12.8	43	16.7	87	33.9	76	29.6	6	2.3	257
I change negative emotions to avoid hurting my feelings	9	3.5	19	7.4	34	13.2	121	47.1	67	26.1	7	2.7	257
I always keep my positive emotions to myself	34	13.2	40	11.7	40	15.6	92	35.8	56	21.8	5	1.9	257
In case I have stressing issues, I meditate to keep calm	15	5.8	28	10.9	27	10.5	95	37.0	85	33.1	7	2.7	257
I walk away from hurting situations.	13	5.1	33	12.8	33	12.8	76	29.6	99	38.5	3	1.2	257
I change the way of thinking about an issue by thinking positively	14	5.4	16	6.2	35	13.6	107	41.6	85	33.1	0	0	257
Changing the way, I think of my situation makes me control my emotions	10	3.9	14	5.4	34	13.2	94	37.4	96	37.4	7	2.7	257
I always avoid keep negative emotions to myself	20	7.8	25	9.7	41	16.0	97	37.7	73	28.4	1	0.4	257
I accept emotions as they come, sort them change my way of thinking of my situation for me to feel less negative emotion	18	7.0	21	8.2	30	11.7	97	37.7	85	33.9	2	1.6	257

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 2  
Emotional regulation indicators

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Self-awareness	47	18.3	18.3	18.3
Modulating response	156	60.7	60.7	79.0
Response to emotions	54	21.0	21.0	100.0
Total	257	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher, 2023

On emotional regulation indications: 18.3% had self-awareness towards their emotions; 60.7% had ability to modulate response and 21.0% had response to emotions.

The descriptive findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 indicates that 8.3% of participants with self-awareness issues experienced rage, 20.8% experienced racing thoughts, 10.4% experienced violence, 35.4% experienced aggression, 10.4% experienced yelling and 14.6% experienced intimidation. Among those with modulating response issues, 1.9% experienced rage, 2.6% had irritability, 18.6% had racing thoughts, 22.4% had violence, 26.9% had aggression, 14.7% had yelling and 12.8% had intimidation. Of participants with

response to emotion issues, 11.3% had rage, 3.8% had irritability, 11.3% had racing thoughts, 34% had violence, 15.1% had aggression, 9.4% had yelling and 15.1% had intimidation.

*B. Inferential Analysis on Emotional Regulation on Intermittent Explosive Disorder*

The study then sought to test the following null hypothesis:

*Ho4: There is no statistical influence of emotional regulation on intermittent explosive disorder among female inmates' violence towards male partner in selected women prisons, Kenya.*

The null hypothesis was tested using a Pearson correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The correlation results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that there is a statistically non-significant negative relationship between emotional regulation and intermittent explosive disorder, [r (257) = -.059, p = .347]. This demonstrates that an increase in intensity of emotional regulation indicators: self-awareness, modulating response, response to emotions, led to a decrease in severity of intermittent explosive disorder indicators: - rage, irritability, racing thoughts, violence, aggression, yelling, intimidation.

Table 3  
Emotional regulation on intermittent explosive disorder

			Intermittent Explosive Disorder Indicators							Total
			Rage	Irritability	Racing thoughts	Violence	Aggression	Yelling	Intimidation	
Emotional Regulation Indicators	Self-awareness	Count	4	0	10	5	17	5	7	48
		% within Emotional Regulation Indicators	8.3%	0.0%	20.8%	10.4%	35.4%	10.4%	14.6%	100.0%
	Modulating response	Count	3	4	29	35	42	23	20	156
		% within Emotional Regulation Indicators	1.9%	2.6%	18.6%	22.4%	26.9%	14.7%	12.8%	100.0%
	Response to emotions	Count	6	2	6	18	8	5	8	53
		% within Emotional Regulation Indicators	11.3%	3.8%	11.3%	34.0%	15.1%	9.4%	15.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	13	6	45	58	67	33	35	257
		% within Emotional Regulation Indicators	5.1%	2.3%	17.5%	22.6%	26.1%	12.8%	13.6%	100.0%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4  
Correlations between emotional regulation and intermittent explosive

		<b>Emotional Regulation Indicators</b>	<b>Intermittent Explosive Disorder Indicators</b>
Emotional Regulation Indicators	Pearson Correlation	1	-.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.347
	N	257	257
Intermittent Explosive Disorder Indicators	Pearson Correlation	-.059	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.347	
	N	257	257

Source: Researcher, 2023

Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no statistical influence of emotional regulation on intermittent explosive disorder among female inmates' violence towards male partner in selected women prisons, Kenya is rejected.

According to the study findings the following are indicators of emotional regulation:

Self-awareness, modulating responses and response emotions. Emotional regulation is the planning, monitoring and assessing individual awareness and ability to regulate feelings, thoughts and situations using various approaches. To understand individual self-awareness, one needs to understand the purpose of their emotions, how to reduce negative emotions, and increase positive emotion (Zhang et al;2022). Therapist assists the client to manage emotions to achieve goals, complete tasks, control and direct behaviour. The therapist implores person centered therapy and psychodynamic approaches with techniques on Emotional Focused Therapy (EFT) to help the client promote awareness of their emotions, expressions, feeling, thoughts of the prevailing situations in life. This enhances the client to achieve goals of wellbeing, mindfulness, calmness and acceptance (Veilleux et al 2022).

According to Patoilo et al. (2021), emotional regulation control is a strategy to assert self- awareness and ability to reappraise situations to avoid escalation of negative emotions leading to regrettable situations such as: -racing thoughts, violence, aggression, yelling and intimidation.

According to (Fahlgren et al; 2019; Hurst et al; 2020), acknowledge that deficit of self-awareness is caused by lack of knowledge, low self-esteem, lack of concern, comparison of the world. Negative emotions lead to maladjusted behaviours such as prejudice and discrimination against other people, which leaves little energy to understand the self.

Findings in this study indicated that inmates had issues with emotional self-awareness.; lacking compassion and individual acceptance in the environment. The presences of IED among the inmates indicated lack emotional awareness to address issues of male partner relationship without using violence and aggression. This concurs with (Lane, 2023; and Smith, 2019), emotional regulation is the ability to effectively manage and respond to emotional experience, rethinking about challenging situation, reduce anger, anxiety, and sadness. For example, in a situation that is challenging, reframing thoughts, practicing calmness, taking a space and having a healthy communication to bring calmness and peace of mind.

According to Zhang et al. (2022), Low emotional intelligence also causes poor emotional decision making, lack of resilience, objectivity and subsequent actions to be taken. Studies by Neilson et al. (2023), indicate that emotional reappraisal consumes significant resources of individual to self-control

emotions; however, this calms the physiological tension in the sympathetic nervous system This gives way causes negative reactions in the body organs; such as the stomach, irritable bowel syndrome and stomach ulcers. Positive reappraisal encourages cognitive thought reframing to see the situation or event positively despite the challenges encountered. For example, in bitter relationship break up, one would reframe thoughts calmly, accept the situation by appreciating the positive intentions of the relationship (Orozo et al., 2021). The findings of this study indicate that the female inmates lacked emotional positive appraisal in partner relationship.

According to Fredrickson et al. (2009) modulating response in emotional regulation is vital to seek reasons, acceptance and happiness in any prevailing situation. The mechanism entails cognitive reframing to influence the role of positive emotions on how to accomplish an activity. Individuals experience different types of emotions for different reasons and priorities in life. For example, hedonists are seen to possess positive emotions such as: happiness, joy, contentment that may be egoistic for individual satisfaction. However, others gain positive emotions on virtuous acts of asceticism or altruism to others. This reflects individual ways of avoiding negative emotions such as anger inadequacy, frustration and emptiness (English et al. 2024; Fredrickson et al.2009).

Ching et al. (2020) quoting Fredrickson (2009), highlights the need for modulation of emotions either to reduce the intensity of emotional experience or increase the time likely to experience a dominant emotion. This regulation provides variation of response to determine the final emotion and the action taken towards goal directed by the behaviour. However, emotions suppression and inhibition of verbal expression, thoughts and feelings may strap out of mind by engaging in other activities; for example; walking away from a scene, meditating or numbing the mind through use of drugs and alcohol overeating, or controlling intake of food.

According to Ray-Yol et al. (2020) Emotional regulation suppression has been associated with poor psychological, physical health and social consequences. For example, in a relationship where a partner gives excessive forbearance over negative unpleasant behaviour; is likely to hurt their feelings, thoughts; causing loneliness and frustration. Suppression of positive emotions in a relationship momentarily increases negative feelings of frustration, resentment, anxiety, depression and stress related illness. According to Barrieiros et al. (2019), people with high suppression of emotions suffer from behaviour inconsistent with their inner feelings and sense of self of guilty. This study findings indicate that female inmates with indicators of low level of emotional regulation suffered high suppression forbearance towards male partners leading to

violence in relationships. Response of emotions in a mental experience unconsciously react to nature and various stimuli in the environment causing cognitive dissonance. Conversely, male partners calmed painful emotions to handle toxic relationship with a hope of finding peace.

### C. Thematic Analysis on Emotional Regulation

A prison chaplain illustrated how to guide the inmates on emotion control. The chaplain had the following to comment on verses from the bible that provided positive emotions such as hope, love, pride, serenity, emotional regulation and forgiveness in life: Ephesians 4:26-32;

*In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.*

The chaplain also indicated the importance of Acts of apostles: 16: 25-34 that illustrates importance of prayers, hope even when the situation is dire.

From the book of Galatians 5: 22-23, 34) the chaplain demonstrated that the verses are important in controlling emotions.

*The fruits of the spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self –control against such there is no law. Do not let the passion of your emotions lead to sin; do not let anger control you, do not steal, be industrious to earn an honest living [prison chaplain in charge of inmates]*

The chaplain illustrations were pointing to emotional control, consistency and persistent in prayer to calm emotions that would lead to violence and anger.

A chaplain guiding inmates on the role processing positive emotions illustrated that using teachings on Mathew 5:4 and Philippians 4:6. Repentance involves feelings of sadness, mourning in confessing sins and selfishness at present, but season of judgment will end with sigh of happiness and joy.

According to the chaplain, after the preaching; one of the inmates jailed on crime of passion approached the chaplain and commented: The chaplain quoting the inmate said: *It is true now I'm seriously regretting, my past life on how I handled my emotions towards other people. I assumed other women lacked feelings, thoughts like mine. Revenge, jealous, hatred, anxiety ungratefulness prevailed in my life over my spouse... Attacking women close to my spouse was normal. I committed murder.....allowed my emotion, passion to prevail at all cost..... looking forward that will be pardoned. Have learnt controlling emotions in all situations is important. [Prison chaplain]*

The chaplain illustrations were pointing to emotional control, consistency and persistent in prayer to calm emotions that would lead to violence and anger.

The chaplain after the preaching on Mathew 27: 38, one of the inmates jailed on crime of robbery with violence spoke to the chaplain appreciating the sermon delivered. The following is a comment from the inmate: The chaplain quoting the inmate said:

*I thought God favored other people except me. ...was jealous*

*of what men possessed; ... Since my childhood men were animals; disliked working. My mother was murdered by a man in the streets ..... grew up with other two sibling in the streets ...prostitution and abusing drugs ...hated men drugged them, steal money and clothes, shoes from men .... After 28 years in the street.....strangled, drugged..... caused death. Now there is salvation my heart is at peace. There is forgiveness ..... Jesus forgave the robber at the cross. There is hope forward .....There is forgiveness. [Prison chaplain]*

In another illustration, prison chaplain guided the inmates on how to guide emotion control; following to comment on verses from the bible were read to provided positive emotional regulation, forgiveness in life: Ephesians 4:26-32;

*In your anger do not sin Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.*

The chaplain also indicated the importance of Acts of apostles: 16: 25-34 that illustrates importance of prayers, hope even when the situations are dire.

From the book of Galatians 5: 22-23, 34) the chaplain the verses are important to learn controlling emotions.

*The fruits of the spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self –control against such there is no law. Do not let the passion of your emotions lead to sin; do not let anger control you, do not steal, be industrious to earn an honest living [prison chaplain in charge of inmates.]*

This concurs with the prison chaplain on inmate' behaviour management based on forgiveness and thought reframing; an inmate had the following to disclose to the prison chaplain. As reported by the chaplain:

*I disliked forgiving my husband or children when they go wrong.....sign of weakness, felt I'm imperfect .....was full of anger bitterness and revenge .....chronically angry never forgiving, impulsive thoughts.....had no stable relationship with the opposite sex, children deserted ....disturbing thoughts....depressed...had to be tough forcing things, ..... Abused hard drugs.....arson attempt. [Interview guide from chaplain]*

During a counselling session, a female inmate also contributed her personal feelings and thoughts on her past life and crime that landing her in prison. This was narrated by the counsellor without disclosure of the client.

*On suspicion of my husband infidelity, prepared havoc .....to invoke fear on him.....locked him out of our the house.....co-accuser attacked him.. unconscious .....now regret ... the matter could have been discussed, I was used to quarreling, shouting bullying poor men.....now I challenge my thoughts he was caring, , I regret, ..... he was the father of my children [ prison counsellor interview guide]*

## 6. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study findings revealed that there was statistically non-significant negative relationship between emotional regulation and intermittent explosive disorder, [ $r(257) = -.059, p = .347$ ]; this means that with increase in self-awareness, modulating

response and response to emotions there was lowering of intermittent explosive disorder in behaviour towards male partners.

According to the study findings, majority of the inmates had modulating response to suppress the negative emotions they were experiencing. However, deficit of self-awareness among most of the inmates, also indicated low levels of emotional intelligence to sustain positive partner relationship. Emotional intelligence is linked to high overall intelligent quotient responsible for individual emotional self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social awareness (Zhang et al., 2022).

Emotional regulation technique is used to control maladaptive emotions and direct them towards more acceptable behaviour. The therapist uses techniques targeting on treatment of the distorted mindful thoughts; helping the client to focus on the causes of maladaptive emotions and how to overcome them. Intentional and flexible responses to deal with anxiety, anger, worry, rumination, self-criticism, sadness are employed by the therapist to overcome negative emotions. According Grecucci et al. (2020) and Ray-Yol et al. (2020); CBT therapist uses 16 sessions on response modulation by the client answering questions on; self-awareness based on Socratic questions on evidence support and causes of distorted thoughts and feelings.

Use of emotional modulation and cognitive reappraisal strategies forms the basis of regulating negative thoughts in therapy. However, according to a study carried out by Luminet et al. (2021), that presence of alexithymia traits influences individual emotions negatively. Despite the high percentage of inmates' emotional modulation response in the study; low percentage of self-awareness to adjust emotion modulation contrasted the same. The presence of IED traits among the inmates prevailed; negatively affecting partner relationship. Emotion regulation provides positive cognitive responses, such as hope, love, interest, joy compassion, and altruism (Fredrickson, 2009). Lack of emotional control perpetuates negative behaviours feelings and thoughts; damaging relationships and reputation (Patoilo, et al., 2021)

Other skills used by the therapist include: Psychoeducation, self-monitoring, mindfulness, and exposure to help the client control anger, and violence. The client accepts to learn skills of tolerance, mindfulness, performing physical exercises and avoiding fixating on a thought.

According to the findings in this study, aggression and violence, among the inmates was high, requiring cognitive restructuring strategies therapy to overcome low thought reframing; increase problem solving, self-monitoring, emotional regulation to maintain self-identity while celebrating their partner's achievements. Where self-evaluation reflection is balanced in a relationship; the impact of IED would be low to cause a negative impact in partner relationship. Presence of violence, anger and irritability in a partner relationship may be caused by envy of accomplishment by the partner in relationship.

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