

# Positive Reinforcement in Coping with Couple Separation: Case Study, Chiclayo 2021

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# Refuerzo Positivo para Afrontar la Separación de Pareja: Estudio de Caso, Chiclayo 2021

## *Positive Reinforcement in Coping with Couple Separation: Case Study, Chiclayo 2021*

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### Abstract

**Objective:** Determine the effects of positive reinforcement in coping with couple separation: Case study, Chiclayo 2021. **Method:** An experimental investigation was carried out, with a type of single case within-subject design; Positive reinforcers were used in order to permanently change the negative behaviors generated from psychological abuse and separation from the couple. To know the coping strategies used by the patients, the Coping Strategies Inventory (CSI) was used, which was applied as a pretest and post test. **Results:** It was observed that the evaluated uses the emotional expression strategy with a higher frequency with a percentile of 85, which means that she focuses her attention on her emotions, which overwhelm her and does not allow her to focus her attention on cognitive restructuring to solve her problems. After the application of the program through positive reinforcers such as extinction of aversive behaviors, social reward, positive self-image and self-concept, dialogue with family and friends, social interaction, informative feedback and strategic changes of thought and action, it has been possible to advance in a significant, insofar as attention has been focused on solving the problem. **Conclusions:** It has been possible to empower the patient insofar as she has stopped criticizing herself and seeing herself as a woman with power and with the desire to take charge of herself; emotional and economic dependence has ceased to be a constant; the evasion of problems has transformed it into affective, maternal and labor potentialities: mentally she feels fortified being able to face her ex-partner to dialogue and decide on the future of the children; she has come to conceive that self-realization depends on her and that being happy is not an idea, but a personal decision.

**Keywords:** Coping Strategies, Positive Reinforcement, Couple Separation, Intra-subject, Experiment

### Resumen

**Objetivo:** Determinar los efectos del refuerzo positivo en el afrontamiento de la separación de pareja: Estudio de caso, Chiclayo 2021. **Método:** Se realizó una investigación experimental, con un diseño tipo caso único intrasujeto; Se utilizaron reforzadores positivos con el fin de cambiar permanentemente las conductas negativas generadas por el maltrato psicológico y la separación de la pareja. Para conocer las estrategias de afrontamiento utilizadas por los pacientes se utilizó el Inventario de Estrategias de Afrontamiento (CSI), el cual se aplicó como pretest y postest. **Resultados:** Se observó que la evaluada utiliza con mayor frecuencia la estrategia de expresión emocional con un percentil de 85, lo que significa que centra su atención en sus emociones, las cuales la desbordan y no le permiten centrar su atención en la reestructuración cognitiva para resolver sus problemas. Tras la aplicación del programa a través de reforzadores positivos como extinción de conductas aversivas, recompensa social, autoimagen y autoconcepto positivos, diálogo con familiares y amigos, interacción social, retroalimentación informativa y cambios estratégicos de pensamiento y acción, se ha posible avanzar de manera significativa, en la medida en que la atención se ha centrado en la solución del problema. **Conclusiones:** Se ha logrado empoderar a la paciente en la medida en que ha dejado de criticarse y verse como una mujer con poder y con ganas de hacerse cargo de sí misma; la dependencia emocional y económica ha dejado de ser una constante; la evasión de problemas la ha transformado en potencialidades afectivas, maternas y laborales: mentalmente se siente fortalecida al poder enfrentarse a su expareja para dialogar y decidir sobre el futuro de los hijos; ha llegado a concebir que la autorrealización depende de ella y que ser feliz no es una idea, sino una decisión personal.

**Palabras clave:** Estrategias de Afrontamiento, Refuerzo Positivo, Separación de Pareja, Intra-sujeto, Experimento

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## INTRODUCTION

Marriage in Peru and the world continues to be an institution that attracts couples; however, due to a series of personal factors, it ends up deteriorating the relationship, resulting in the separation of the bond. In Peru, according to recent data, the separation of marriages has increased, reaching its highest peak in 2021, registering 7,386 cases published in the Public Registries. The regions of Lima, Arequipa, La Libertad and Piura in the north of Perú are the ones with the highest rate of divorces, concentrating 79% of the cases (Infobe, 2021). From the perspective of Bodensee (2019), the divorce figures in Latin America are alarming, since the divorce rate has doubled four times more. These data have been corroborated by an investigation carried out by the United Nations (UN) in a population made up of women from Latin America and the Caribbean, where it is pointed out that child and adolescent marriage or cohabitation before the age of 18 continues to cause serious problems, turning the region into a one of the highest in single-parent households. These bulky figures attract attention, because it allows us to deduce that life as a couple is going through a strong crisis with painful consequences, especially for children.

In Chile, García & Ilabaca (2013) published a study related to the separation of couples, coping and psychological well-being in young adults, for which 227 people of both sexes participated, whose ages ranged between 18 and 35 years and with a characteristic common: having ended the couple's relationship in recent years. To evaluate the study variables, they used the CSI Coping Strategies Inventory and psychological well-being with the Riff Psychological Well-Being Scale modified by Díaz. The study mentions that separation from the relationship is the best decision, since it allows mentally restructuring the separation, which leads to initiating the grieving process, with the consequent acquisition of a better emotional panorama. The study extracts as important data the support of friends and family and the psychological balance, as it allows finding understanding and advice, the result of

which leads to transform the negative state of mind to a positive outlook, related to a better meaning of the meaning of life. (Which includes the search for and psychological balance. Consequently, the search for social support is a way of coping with problems, leading the patient to find emotional tranquility and the advent of new behaviors, leaving aside self-criticism and wishful thinking.

In Peru, approximately 70,000 couples get married each year, and at the same time, around 14,000 divorces are reported, which is equivalent to saying that, out of 5 marriages, one ends up getting divorced; Among the reasons for the separations are the arrival of the first child during the first year; marital infidelity problems; inadequate couple communication; at 11 and 20 years of cohabitation, the empty nest syndrome reappears (Peru21, 2021). A study carried out in Cajamarca by Chingay (2021), showed that there are four most frequent causes of divorce: adultery (21%), physical or psychological violence (18%), registered divorces and the attack against the spouse and due to differences irreconcilable. Rodríguez (2020) finds emotional dependence as a central problem in couples; Anguita (2017) has also studied this topic, rescuing low self-esteem and poor awareness of the problem as the cause of the separation. The study by Carrasco et al. (2021) highlights the repercussions of the breakup such as depression, anxiety and self-destructive behaviors. Among the causes of the rupture, they point out physical-emotional abuse. Espinoza et al. (2018) also highlight the decrease in self-concept as an effect of the breakup.

For his part, Montano (2011), has developed a work in which she seeks to describe certain characteristics of women aged 20 to 35 who are mistreated by their partners; we worked based on a population of 58 women; Among the conclusions, learned helplessness (90%) due to mistreatment by their partners stands out; another group of victims was represented by low self-esteem, dependency traits, fear, and a lower frequency of depression and anxiety. Due to the incidence of abuse, the study was able to determine that, mostly, they had received psychological, physical, economic

and sexual abuse. Another of the conclusive points of the investigation is that the abuse was centered on women who had only passed primary and secondary school; It is also possible to show that the women who decided to finish their university careers did so out of conviction and against their partners; They also note that several of the conflicts were due to the fact that their partners were opposed to them continuing with their studies and this brought with it the breakup with their partner. It is possible to demonstrate that women who married at a later age (25 years and older), had better resources to overcome conflicts, but not so with women who had joined at 18 or younger, being the most attacked. Finally, it is shown that the women who were living together without a legal commitment were the most mistreated, even before living together; and the women who had made a courtship were less mistreated.

The study of four cases by Carmona (2012), focused on the responses of grief after loss and on intervention techniques, determines that low self-esteem and negative labeling are one of the causes of discomfort in the couple. It is also shown that the affected person becomes guilty, feeling that they did little or wrong to safeguard the integrity of the relationship. One of the consequences found of abuse in the relationship was related to a negative view of herself and a distorted emotional repercussion, that is, fear of pain, not finding a new partner, not getting out of sadness and pain. All these feelings led them to continue enduring abuse from their partners; It has even been possible to reveal a false conception of themselves, becoming sexual means of their partners so that they do not distance themselves from them. As therapeutic proposals, it is proposed to work on empathy, translating into an understanding of pain, warmth to express frustration, identification of the lost object and mental-emotional decongestion. It is also suggested to work on the promotion of new beliefs, such as deliberative guides on life and love schemes, cognitive-behavioral restructuring, new forms on functional attributions of loss and strengthening of self-love.

The problem that has been described above leads to the perception that there is an urgent need to investigate this topic further, because it allows finding control mechanisms or strategies with which the problem that the person who has been chosen can be faced with. To carry out this case study and that, at the same time, becomes a “means” to be able to learn to use the tools of experimental psychology.

Carrying out a study about the effects that positive reinforcers may have in a case study, related to the separation of the couple, where there has been a series of problems that have been marking the existence of the affected person, constitutes an instrument relevant in that, from this experience, it was possible to extract certain positive lessons, which have been applied to the case studied, and could be transferred to other similar cases. In this sense, the study that was carried out was of great social utility. In turn, the application of positive reinforcer strategies have made it possible to find solution mechanisms, because it was planned to test the efficacy of some elements of cognitive behavioral therapy, such as the series of feelings and actions that enable the person to manage the stressful situation you are going through. It was also proposed to apply coping focused on transcendence, so that he begins to overcome the past and work on a new life project towards the future.

From the theoretical approach, the research sought to collect a series of concepts, theories, therapeutic proposals, methodologies used by positive reinforcement (2021); Rodrigo, (2020), it also allowed to investigate, in the published studies, those results and recommendations that they are made. All these theoretical elements allowed us to understand the complexity of the topic that was addressed, and at the same time, served as support to organize the work proposal with the person involved in the case study. And from the methodological approach, this research, in the first place, allowed to know, more thoroughly, the different methodological approaches of experimental psychology; secondly, it meant

learning for researchers about the domain of therapy focused on positive reinforcement, in relation to a case of couple separation; thirdly, it was possible to know the different therapeutic approaches proposed by specialists in approach from positive coping. Finally, from the study of the various theories of coping, certain strategies were designed in order to work with the patient and be able to modify negative behaviors, managing to structure a new meaning of herself and her surrounding world. To achieve this goal, the effect of positive reinforcement on coping with couple separation was determined in a case study, Chiclayo 2021.

## METHODOLOGY

In the case of this investigation, we worked based on an experimental investigation, with an intra-subject design (single case) which, according to Castro (2002), refers to the systematic application over time of a series of treatments or the same treatment for each of the subjects. In this paradigm, the use of the measurement of a single organism under controlled conditions stands out, which is called experimental analysis of behavior. Based on these criteria, for the purposes of this case study, we worked with the type of non-reversal within-subject design insofar as it was intended to address the case with positive reinforcers in order to permanently change the behaviors generated from the abuse and separation of the couple.

The independent variable manipulated in the program was focused on positive reinforcement, defined by Perió (2021), as “a resource that is used in the field of psychology with the aim of rewarding those conducts or behaviors so that they are strengthened and consolidated”. According to the aforementioned source, positive reinforcement has certain characteristics: It can strengthen a behavior; uses pleasant rewards, such as encouraging and motivating words, kind gestures to motivate the desired behavior; it must be used properly, that is, it must be known how to use it in specific cases and situations that require it;

positive reinforcement should always be given after the practice of that behavior. For purposes of the case study, secondary reinforcers were worked on; social reinforcers (praise, verbal expressions of approval); activity reinforcers (visiting friends, trips, going to the movies with close people, listening to appropriate music, reading positive self-help texts, walks); positive informative feedback (reading the meaning of an empowered, autonomous, independent woman; information about self-concept, respect); Premack principle (2021), we worked with this principle to reinforce behaviors related to autonomy, positive self-concept of herself in order to modify negative images of herself.

The subject on whom the independent variable acted was a 36-year-old woman; native of Cajamarca, with residence in the city of Chiclayo; He currently lives in Lima. She is the mother of three children: one girl and two boys. Her eldest daughter and her second son live with the father and she lives with her third youngest son. He contracted a civil marriage at the age of 17. In terms of education, he has only finished primary school. Professionally, she has not followed any career; she has always dedicated herself to caring for and feeding her children; currently caring for a one-year-old baby.

The circumstances in which the independent variable acted were contextualized in a woman emotionally separated from her husband for a year; she has not followed any legal process, she has simply decided to distance herself from her husband; emotionally she felt worried about her children; her partner, as a result of the separation, has tried to speak ill of her in front of her children and every time she speaks with him, he abuses her psychologically, making her feel diminished, which affects her image as a woman; many times she has let her know that she is a bad mother and that she is a harmful example for her children. His relationship with her oldest daughter is tense, because she reproaches to the evaluated for being a bad wife, who should not be separated from her father.

economic plane; she has had to endure harassment because she was afraid of leaving his children without a father image; the love and respect of the couple has ended; she does not know how to proceed with the divorce, she is not clear on this issue and needs legal advice in which she can clarify the food and educational support of the children. She is currently tied to her children, who are against her, because her husband speaks ill of her; and since she is tied to her children, she is also tied to her partner. Psychologically she feels stressed, with a much-altered emotional charge, which is why she feels vulnerable and with little strength to face the problem.

The instrument used to extract information has been adapted to the Spanish version by Morán, Landero and Gonzáles (2010) from the Brief COPE-28 by Carver (2010). In the words of the authors, the COPE “is a multidimensional inventory, developed to evaluate

the different forms of response to stress” (p. 545). This instrument has 41 items and 8 subscales ordered according to the Likert-type ordinal scale with four response alternatives, following an order: Not at all (0), a little (1), quite a lot (2), a lot (3) and totally (4). The inventory works based on three dimensions: Active coping and problem-focused planning; focused on emotion and focused on avoidance. Each dimension is structured in scales: Problem solving, self-criticism, emotional expression, wishful thinking, social support, cognitive restructuring, problem avoidance, and social withdrawal. Regarding validity and reliability, Cano et al. (2007), adapted the instrument to the Spanish reality, where 2,000 people participated, demonstrating adequate reliability and validity indices: Cronbach’s alpha coefficients between 0.82 and 0.90. For the purposes of an analysis close to the problematic reality of the case, this instrument was applied twice to the study subject.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

From the administration of the pretest and posttest, the results were analyzed, obtaining the following data:

**Table 1.**

*Results of the application of the pretest*

Coping styles	Percentile	Score
Troubleshooting	14	40
Self-criticism	10	80
Emotional expression	15	85
Wishful thinking	14	60
Social support	16	80
Cognitive restructuring	15	80
Problem avoidance	9	80
Social withdrawal	11	95

**Interpretation:** According to the results obtained in the pretest, it can be seen in table 01 and in figure 01 that the evaluated person mostly focuses her attention on emotional expansion, obtaining a score of 15, equivalent to a percentile of 85, which indicates that she is mostly using this strategy to deal with the problem of partner separation; a second strategy that she is using is social support, reaching a score of 16, equivalent to a percentile of 80, this means that she looks for alternatives to express his emotions in other people. Another common way of dealing with the problem is through the use of the cognitive training strategy, obtaining a score of 15, which is equivalent to a percentile of 80. This means that they she or the evaluated for alternative solutions to the problem in another or other people. In problem solving, the person evaluated has obtained a score of 14, equivalent to a percentile of 40; this means that to a lesser extent she is planning to solve the problem, using cognitive, analytical and rational strategies to alter the situation and solve the problem. In the use of the self-critical strategy, she has obtained a score of 10, equivalent to a percentile of 80. This result means that she does not have coping strategies for the problem and that the degree of self-reproach or self-punishment is increasing.

In wishful thinking, The evaluated scored 14 out of the 60th percentile. It means she wish that reality was not happening and was not stressful. In the problem avoidance strategy, she has obtained a score of nine, which is equivalent to a percentile of 80; this means that she does not have the strategies and, therefore, she does not have the right tools to deal with the problems that she IS experiencing. In the social withdrawal strategy, she has obtained a score of 11, equivalent to a percentile of 95. This result allows us to point out that the evaluated woman flees from others so that they do not know her problem or both, or she feels that she does not understand. In the cognitive reconstruction strategy, a score of 15 has been

obtained, equivalent to a percentile of 80. This means that adequate tools have not been found to modify the problem or stressful situation; it has not been able to transform the meaning and, therefore, it has not been able to reduce the intensity of the stressful stimulus.

After describing the results of the pretest, we proceeded to analyze the results of the posttest, whose results were compared from the completion of the sessions related to positive reinforcers. The results were the following:

**Table 2.**

*Compared results of the application of the pretest and posttest.*

Coping styles	Pretest		Post test	
Problem resolution	14	40	18	70
Self-criticism	10	80	05	15
Emotional expression	15	85	14	80
Wishful thinking	14	60	11	45
Social support	16	80	18	90
Cognitive restructuring	15	80	16	85
Problem avoidance	9	80	14	97
Social withdrawal	11	95	7	80

**Interpretation:** The results obtained in the post test, after the application of the scheduled sessions, reflect significant changes. In the pretest, in the emotional expression strategy, a score of 15 was obtained, equivalent to a percentile of 85; after applying the positive reinforcers, a score of 14 was obtained, equivalent to a percentile of 80. This means that the evaluated person has begun to transfer her emotions to other indicators and stop focusing only on her. In the social support coping strategy, in the pretest he obtained a score of 16 and a percentile of 80; In the post test, the score was 18 and a percentile of 90, which indicates that she is looking for alternatives to express her emotions with the help of other people. In problem solving in the pretest, a score of 14 was obtained, equivalent to a percentile of 40; with the application of the posttest, there is a score of 18 and a percentile of 70; This variation allows observing that the evaluated is using cognitive analytical and rational strategies to alter the situation and solve the problem. Regarding the self-critical strategy, in the pretest he obtained a score of 10, equivalent to a percentile of 80; in the post test, a score of 05 and a percentile of 15 were obtained, which means that the evaluated one has changed her strategy, that is, she uses self-reproach or self-punishment less.

In wishful thinking, a score of 14 and a percentile of 60 were accessed on the pretest; in the post test there is a score of 11 and a percentile of 45, which is equivalent to saying that the person evaluated is coping with stressful problems, no matter how many sources there may be. In the problem avoidance coping strategy, in the pretest she obtained a score of 9, which is equivalent to a percentile of 80; in the post test, the score was 14 and a percentile of 97. This result means that she is still avoiding problems and that she does not have all the strategies to deal with the problems that she is experiencing.

In the social withdrawal coping strategy in the pretest, a score of 11 and a percentile of 95 were obtained; in the post test, a score of 7 and a percentile of 80 were

obtained; This result allows us to point out that she has decided not to continue running away from others and that this do not know about her problems, but that her family and friends have become her allies to face the problem of separation. Regarding the cognitive restructuring strategy, a score of 15 and a percentile of 80 were obtained in the pretest; in the application of the posttest there was a variation of 1 point (15) and a percentile varied in 5 points (85); this means that the evaluated person has begun to modify her cognitive abilities, coming to modify the meaning of the separation and see other options for solving the problem.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Based on the results obtained in the present investigation, regarding the general objective that was it was possible to demonstrate the general hypothesis, that is, by developing the planned sessions, working based on the positive reinforcer of the positive self-image, the patient was able to change certain attitudes towards the problem and towards herself. Before the work on positive reinforcers, she had a concept of a dependent woman; after the execution of the program, she sees herself more empowered, with strategies to face the separation without depending on anyone. This result is due to working on the issue of positive self-concept, giving rise to feeling empowered, with the ability to decide to get out of the problem and look at the future in a different way, with optimism. The use of this personal positive reinforcer, according to Esnaola, Goñi and Madariaga (2008), allows people to have an emotional adjustment and lead a certain autonomy, that is, to have the ability to make decisions about their lives based on their own criteria; on the other hand, she has allowed herself to fulfill herself coming to have clear objectives of personal achievement (p. 73).

In the specific objective one, the aim was to “Identify the effect of positive reinforcement on coping focused on the problem before the separation of the couple in a case study, Chiclayo 2021”, the results of the pretest showed that the evaluated used this strategy in a partial; after the application of the program, there has been a significant variation, which indicates that the use of the positive reinforcer of talking about the problem with those responsible for the program, has allowed confronting the husband and being able to dialogue with him about the relationship, making it clear that the marriage has reached a final stage and that only a parental relationship remains. This coping strategy, in which the positive reinforcer of dialogue has been used, is supported by Banquero and Paredes (2019), who state that this technique allows solving problems that arise when the environment does not respond as expected. One of the techniques that recommended to use is reflection and the ability to think before impulsiveness leads to acting in an inappropriate and incorrect way; Together with the aforementioned strategies, it is suggested that the cognitive skills of verification, planning, observation of the process of approaching the problem itself be used (p. 74). This that is mentioned in the study, it has been possible to work with the evaluated, reflecting in the cognitive restructuring (from a percentile of 80 to 85) after the posttest. To reach this result, the reinforcer of the activity was worked on (19), that is, it was suggested to assertively confront the relationship with the daughter, with whom she had a frictional relationship. This result is supported by the results of the study by Garavito et al (2020), who recommend working on acceptance and commitment therapy and mindfulness; cognitive reframing or prescription of negative thoughts. Apart from being aware of the rupture, it could be used to learn and grow personally. This way of carrying out a rupture process is related to the Premack principle in that the retribution is greater than the problem (Guzman, 2021; Restrepo, 2021).

Due to the use of the aforementioned reinforcer, the relationship has improved. These advances have been reinforced by the work team through positive informative feedback: It has been made known to her

that she is a brave woman to face the problem and dialogue with her partner in a polite manner; it has been suggested that she stop looking after her ex-husband and take more time for herself; she is invited to go out on weekends to visit a friend (or), to sing encouraging songs, that allow her to awaken the hope of something better; It was also suggested that he not listen to music with content of failure and heartbreak. The results obtained lead to the fulfillment of the hypothesis “If positive reinforcement is applied, then it will improve coping focused on the problem before the separation of the couple in a case study”. From what has been verified, cognitive restructuring plays an important role, as pointed out by Bulacio et al. (2004): “... psychoeducation is a process that can be oriented towards psychopathology or people in general...” Consequently, the positive intrinsic backup reinforcers lead to the birth of a new way of thinking about problems (1992).

The second specific objective was to “Identify the effect of positive reinforcement on coping focused on emotion in the face of couple separation in a case study”. The results obtained in the pre-test showed that the woman evaluated gave great importance to emotional expression (15-85), showing few strategies to release emotions, which led to greater stress. After the application of the post test, it was possible to verify certain significant changes (in the management of emotions 14-80). To achieve these results, some secondary positive reinforcers were worked on (Rodrigo, 2020), such as the extinction of some behaviors: from conceiving that she is a failed woman to a woman with opportunities; from conceiving herself valued from being a good wife and a good mother to thinking that her value lies in herself; from self-criticism and being economically dependent to having to evaluate her kitchen skills, which could generate economic income by giving birth to the possibility of creating a business. This way of solving a problem is related to the proposal of Nezu, et al. (2006), who argue that rational problem solving consists of a range of specific cognitive and behavioral processes, such as: problem specification, which consists of determining the reasons why a unique experience becomes a

problem; the generation of options, which is carried out through the use of several alternatives, such as brainstorming, a list of varied probable solutions, with the aim of identifying those effective ideas; decision making, which is achieved through a systematic analysis of all those convenient alternatives, to then balance the positive and negative results; then, based on this evaluation, a comprehensive solution plan could be implemented; finally, the evaluation of the results that consists of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of a solution plan. Nezu's proposal has made it possible to work, within the framework of secondary positive reinforcers, on the extinction of behaviors and the appearance of others, such as taking some time to evaluate the results of the dialogue with her ex-husband and with her children. The result is favorable. Consequently, the application of positive reinforcement (such as social reward: visiting friends, going for a walk with a friend, enjoying dinner with friends), is beneficial to overcome the emotional focus on the problem. The use of these reinforcers is related to what Jimeno and Conejero (2019) point out, who point out that coping with emotions refers to a series of efforts aimed at coping with stressful situations; They also understand it as a cognitive and behavioral test of the people with whom they try to solve the controversy between the requirements of the context and personal capacities.

On the other hand, Jimeno and Conejero (2019) recommend that in order to work on the regulation of emotions, certain steps must be followed: Regulate the confrontation of facts, which consists of modifying what they feel by regulating exposure to events or situations that cause emotions (in the case of the study, the evaluated woman was asked to stop focusing her attention on the separation and to dedicate more time to herself, going through personal care; to try not to talk about the man). Secondly, there is the regulation of the processing of external information, in which the modification of interpretations, thoughts, images (a kind of intrapsychic coping) is sought. In the case that is being studied, to achieve this objective, the issue of communication has been worked on, in which the evaluated woman has been warned not to

listen to people who are not involved in the problem (sisters-in-law and relatives of the husband), but to communicate (if necessary) directly with the ex-partner (Chingay, 2021). And this has given good results. A third regulatory pathway is related to expressive and behavioral tendencies, which has to do with the suppression or inhibition of expressions and behaviors. To carry out this regulation, the reinforcer of the extinction of the behavior has been worked on, which consists of not giving options to resume the coital relationship, because it would be a setback and encourage the couple to continue manipulating their emotions and creating false expectations.. It has been warned that it should not expose itself, nor provoke or give lack of hope in this dimension (Bados y Garcia, 2011). Based on what has been pointed out in this objective, we conclude that the hypothesis "If positive reinforcement is applied, then it will improve coping focused on the problem emotion in the face of couple separation in a case study, Chiclayo 2021".

## CONCLUSION

From the general objective, it is concluded that the effects of positive reinforcers (behavioral extinction, social reward, positive self-image) on coping have made it possible to improve strategies to overcome the separation of the couple, as it has allowed them to restructure their emotions, thoughts and attitudes. Prior to the application of positive reinforcers, the evaluated woman had a concept of a dependent woman; later, as a result of the application of the program, empowerment was achieved, acquiring the capacity to face the separation without depending on anyone; this indicates that the cognitive restructuring strategy has been well worked through the positive reinforcement of the positive self-image, which has allowed it to modify the self-concept, leading to get out of the problem and look at the future with optimism.

A significant variation was obtained with the use of the positive reinforcer when talking about the problem with those responsible for the program, leading her to confront her husband and be able to talk with him about the relationship, making it clear that the marriage has reached a final stage and that only there remains a parental relationship.

The use of secondary positive reinforcers such as the extinction of some behaviors, allowed to change thinking, that is, from the image of a failed woman to a woman with opportunities; of conceiving herself valued from being a good wife and mother to think that her value is in herself; from self-criticism and being financially dependent, to conceiving that self-realization depends on her and that being happy is not an idea, but a decision.

The positive social reinforcers (visiting relatives, friends, going out dancing, going to the movies), used in the work with the patient, helped to open her mind and acquire new ways of coping with the stress of separation. At the same time, the suggestion to change listening to music (rejected songs that sing of disappointment and failure) to positive music, without aggression towards women and that sings of overcoming, has led the patient to stop thinking about failure and thinking that life gives new opportunities.

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