Clinical Trial Protocol
Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

07 Nov 2026

Comparing the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy with compassion-focused therapy on cognitive flexibility, maladaptive magnification, and parenting stress in mothers of children with autism

Protocol summary

Study aim
Comparing the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy with compassion-focused therapy on cognitive flexibility, maladaptive magnification, and parenting stress in mothers of children with autism

Design
A clinical trial study with a control group, with parallel groups, is selected through a purposive method, and then, from the 45 people who were selected, they are non-randomly placed into two experimental groups and a control group.

Settings and conduct
45 mothers of children with autism were selected according to the research criteria and then divided into two intervention groups and a control group, each group consisting of 15 people, and blinding was not performed.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria
Inclusion criteria: Informed consent to participate in the study, having a child with autism, age range 30 to 50 years. Exclusion criteria: Use of psychiatric medications and psychological treatments during the study based on clinical interview, history of using similar interventions in the period close to the study

Intervention groups
Intervention 1: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Helps clients achieve a more fulfilling life by increasing psychological flexibility and has six central processes: cognitive dissonance, acceptance, connection to the present, self as context, values, and committed action. This intervention will be delivered by the researcher for 8, 60-minute sessions each week. Intervention 2: Compassion-Focused Therapy: In the present study, therapists help clients by creating and enhancing an internal compassionate relationship with themselves, rather than blaming, condemning, or self-criticizing them. This intervention will be delivered by the researcher for 8, 60-minute sessions each week. Control Group: No therapy will be provided to them.

Main outcome variables
Cognitive flexibility, maladaptive magnification, and parenting stress

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information
IRCT registration number: **IRCT20250819066913N1**
Registration date: **2025-09-21, 1404/06/30**
Registration timing: **registered_while_recruiting**

Last update: **2025-09-21, 1404/06/30**
Update count: **0**

Registration date
2025-09-21, 1404/06/30

Registrant information

Name
zohre shams some kabodin
Name of organization / entity
Country
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
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+98 21 3383 0844
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Recruitment status
Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date
2025-09-06, 1404/06/15

Expected recruitment end date
2025-12-06, 1404/09/15

Actual recruitment start date

empty

Actual recruitment end date

empty

Trial completion date

empty

Scientific title

Comparing the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy with compassion-focused therapy on cognitive flexibility, maladaptive magnification, and parenting stress in mothers of children with autism

Public title

Comparing the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy with compassion-focused therapy

Purpose

Education/Guidance

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria:

Informed consent to participate in research Having a child with autism Age range 30 to 50 years

Exclusion criteria:

Use of psychiatric medications and psychological treatments during the study based on clinical interviews History of using similar interventions in the time period close to the study

Age

From **30 years** old to **50 years** old

Gender

Female

Phase

N/A

Groups that have been masked

No information

Sample size

Target sample size: **45**

Randomization (investigator's opinion)

Not randomized

Randomization description

Blinding (investigator's opinion)

Not blinded

Blinding description

Placebo

Not used

Assignment

Parallel

Other design features

Secondary Ids

empty

Ethics committees

1

Ethics committee

Name of ethics committee

Ethics Committee of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz Branch

Street address

Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz Branch, , Farhang Shahr, Golestan Highway

City

ahvaz

Province

Khouzestan

Postal code

6134937333

Approval date

2025-06-07, 1404/03/17

Ethics committee reference number

IR.IAU.AHVAZ.REC.1404.146

Health conditions studied

1

Description of health condition studied

autism

ICD-10 code

F84.1

ICD-10 code description

Atypical autism

Primary outcomes

1

Description

Cognitive flexibility

Timepoint

At the beginning of the study (before the intervention) and about three months after the intervention, i.e. after the intervention was completed.

Method of measurement

Dennis and Vanderwaal Cognitive Acceptance Questionnaire

2

Description

Non-adaptive magnification

Timepoint

At the beginning of the study (before the intervention) and about three months after the intervention, i.e. after the intervention was completed.

Method of measurement

Riskind et al.'s maladaptive magnification questionnaire

3

Description

Parenting stress

Timepoint

At the beginning of the study (before the intervention) and about three months after the intervention, i.e. after the intervention was completed.

Method of measurement

Abidin Parenting Stress Questionnaire

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups

1

Description

Intervention group 1: Acceptance and commitment therapy: The goal of this therapy is to help clients achieve a more valuable and satisfying life by increasing psychological flexibility and has six central processes: cognitive dysfunction, acceptance, connection with the present, self as context, values, and committed action. The acceptance and commitment therapy intervention program, designed by Hayes et al., was taught to the study subjects in 8 60-minute sessions, once a week for three months. Session 1: Introduction and structuring of the group, Session 2: Identification of members' problem behaviors and introduction to ACT therapy, Review of assignments, Session 3: Creation of the concept of creative helplessness, Session 4: Present tense, Session 5: Acceptance, Session 6: Defusion (faulting) of the self as context (observing self), Session 7: Values and committed action, Session 8: Review of the group process and experiences, Summary of sessions, Post-test.

Category

Behavior

2

Description

Intervention group 2: Compassion-based therapy: It includes the three principles of mindfulness, self-kindness, and a sense of sharing with humanity. The main focus of this therapy is to cultivate a compassionate mind; therefore, therapists help clients by creating and increasing an internal compassionate relationship with themselves, instead of blaming, condemning, or self-criticizing them. In the present study, the structure of the sessions is taken from Gilbert's book Compassion-Focused Therapy, translated by Affirmative and Grace. In 8 60-minute sessions, the subjects under study are taught once a week for three months. Session 1: Introduction to the general principles of compassion-based therapy, Session 2: Introduction to self-critical behavior and thoughts, Session 3: Accepting mistakes and forgiving oneself, Session 4: Understanding and being able to tolerate difficult situations, Session 5: Creating pleasant emotions, Session 6: Introduction to compassionate behavior, Session 7: Training in compassionate mental imagery, Session 8: Reviewing training topics.

Category

Behavior

3

Description

Control group: No psychological treatment will be given to the control group.

Category

Behavior

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center

Name of recruitment center
Paya Autism Rehabilitation Center, Tehran

Full name of responsible person
zohre Shams Some kabodin

Street address
Aria Complex a, Nasim 6, Chitgar, Kohak St

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Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor

Name of organization / entity
Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person
Dr. Pejman Taghipour Birgani

Street address
Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Farhang Shahr, Golestan Highway

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Grant name

Grant code / Reference number

Is the source of funding the same sponsor organization/entity?
Yes

Title of funding source
Islamic Azad University

Proportion provided by this source
100

Public or private sector
Public

Domestic or foreign origin
Domestic

Category of foreign source of funding
empty

Country of origin

Type of organization providing the funding
Academic

Person responsible for general inquiries

Contact

Name of organization / entity
Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person
zohre Shams Some kabodin

Position
PhD student

Latest degree
Master

Other areas of specialty/work
Psychology

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Sharing plan

Deidentified Individual Participant Data Set (IPD)
Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Study Protocol
Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Statistical Analysis Plan
Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Informed Consent Form
Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Clinical Study Report
Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Analytic Code
Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Data Dictionary
Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available