Clinical Trial Protocol
Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

06 Nov 2026

Comparing the effectiveness of drama therapy and cognitive behavioral play therapy on emotional self-awareness, problem-solving skills, and social adjustment of bully elementary school students

Protocol summary

Study aim

The overall aim of this study is to compare the effectiveness of drama therapy and cognitive-behavioral play therapy on emotional self-awareness, problem-solving skills, and social adjustment of bullied elementary school students in Ahvaz.

Design

For the first experimental group, drama therapy intervention will be implemented, and for the second experimental group, cognitive-behavioral play therapy intervention will be implemented. The control group will not receive any intervention.

Settings and conduct

After selecting and placing the research sample in groups, a pre-test will be taken from the students through questionnaires related to measuring the research variables. These questionnaires include the Emotional Self-Awareness Questionnaire, the Heppner Problem Solving Questionnaire, and the California Social Adjustment Questionnaire. After that, the experimental groups will receive the desired intervention. After implementing the interventions, a post-test will be taken from the students and finally the research findings will be analyzed.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria

In the present study, after selecting the desired elementary school and coordinating with relevant officials, the Illinois Bullying Questionnaire will first be provided to all students in the desired elementary school, and 45 bully students will be selected as the research sample.

Intervention groups

Students will be randomly assigned to three groups: two experimental groups and one control group, each consisting of 15 students. The first experimental group will receive drama therapy intervention, the second experimental group will receive play therapy intervention, and the control group will not receive any intervention.

Main outcome variables

1- Emotional self-awareness 2- Problem-solving skills 3- Social adjustment

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information

IRCT registration number: **IRCT20260108068594N1**
Registration date: **2026-01-29, 1404/11/09**
Registration timing: **prospective**

Last update: **2026-01-29, 1404/11/09**
Update count: **0**

Registration date

2026-01-29, 1404/11/09

Registrant information

Name

Fateme Askari

Name of organization / entity

Country

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Phone

+98 61 3293 0745

Email address

fateme.askari57@gmail.com

Recruitment status

Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date

2026-01-31, 1404/11/11

Expected recruitment end date

2026-02-14, 1404/11/25

Actual recruitment start date
empty
Actual recruitment end date
empty
Trial completion date
empty

Scientific title
Comparing the effectiveness of drama therapy and cognitive behavioral play therapy on emotional self-awareness, problem-solving skills, and social adjustment of bully elementary school students

Public title
Comparing the effectiveness of drama therapy and cognitive behavioral play therapy on emotional self-awareness, problem-solving skills, and social adjustment of bully elementary school students in Ahvaz
Purpose
Treatment
Inclusion/Exclusion criteria
Inclusion criteria:
Bullying students Elementary school students Students of Ahvaz city
Exclusion criteria:
Lack of consent from parents or the student themselves Presence of severe psychiatric disorders Receiving treatment or counseling at the same time Frequent absences from school or the possibility of non-compliance Reporting acute family problems or environmental instability Severe cognitive-linguistic disability
Age
From **9 years** old to **12 years** old
Gender
Both

Phase
N/A
Groups that have been masked
No information
Sample size
Target sample size: **45**
Randomization (investigator's opinion)
Randomized
Randomization description
In this study, cluster random sampling method will be used to select the research sample. First, the General Directorate of Education of Khuzestan Province will be referred to and a district will be randomly selected from the different education districts of Ahvaz city. Then, an elementary school will be randomly selected from that district and Illinois Bullying Questionnaires will be distributed among the students of that school to determine the desired sample. After the bully students are identified through the questionnaire, they will be randomly (by drawing lots) placed into three groups (two experimental groups and one control group).
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
No. 91, Qanadanzadeh Street
City
Ahvaz
Province
Khouzestan
Postal code
6194643517
Approval date
2025-12-17, 1404/09/26
Ethics committee reference number
IR.IAU.AHVAZ.REC.1404.561

Health conditions studied

1

Description of health condition studied
Bullying students in primary school in Ahvaz
ICD-10 code
ICD-10 code description

Primary outcomes

1

Description
Emotional Awareness Questionnaire (EAQ-30) score
Timepoint
Pre-test and post-test
Method of measurement
Emotional Awareness Questionnaire (EAQ-30)

2

Description
Heppner Problem Solving Questionnaire (PSI) score
Timepoint
Pre-test and post-test
Method of measurement
Heppner Problem Solving Questionnaire (PSI)

3

Description
California Social Adjustment Questionnaire score

Timepoint
Pre-test and post-test
Method of measurement
California Social Adjustment Questionnaire

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups

1

Description
Intervention group: drama therapy. In this study, drama therapy is considered as an independent variable. In the present study, drama therapy techniques intervention based on Moreno's (1982) approach will be used in 10 60-minute sessions. Summary of intervention sessions for drama therapy techniques based on Moreno's approach: Session 1: Introduction, acceptance and problem recognition. Session 2: A sincere and non-bullying atmosphere for student participants and the implementation of drama games, recognizing the seven main emotions, interest (curiosity and exploratory behavior), fear, anger, anxiety, love, pleasure through drama performance and teaching cognitive, physiological and behavioral consequences, emotional reactions and the relationship between emotion, cognition and behavior, how to respond to one's emotional experiences. Session 3: Using mirror techniques and introducing oneself, observing events and conversations of others while performing events on stage in order to achieve a useful perspective or the need for emotional distance to better understand one's feelings. Session 4: Body awareness, body posture (body position), reading body language and awareness of sensory stimuli and responding to them. Session 5: Using the role-changing method, playing the role of the victim by the client and presenting the role of the bully by another person or the therapist and guiding the bully in the new role is for managing bullying behaviors. Session 6: Getting to know your own and others' rights and how to demand them through role-playing and dramatization by students. Session 7: Using the role-playing technique, symbolically confronting the client with situations or a specific person or object that is the source of bullying in the individual's life, and visualizing them and playing the role of the same situations by the client and the therapist. Session 8: Using the empty chair technique, sharing your feelings and establishing communication and a desire to be friends with another person who is absent, and expressing your concern about the person in question by talking to the empty chair that is a symbol of a person. Session 9: Creating a real situation to test the level of bullying and expressing emotion, creating a situation for the bully and assessing the reaction and level of bullying behavior, and recording the level of behavior. Session 10: Strengthening interpersonal interactions, teaching skills to get along with others, using polite words, and following the rules
Category
Treatment - Other

2

Description
Intervention group: Cognitive behavioral play therapy. In this study, cognitive-behavioral play therapy is considered as the independent variable. In the present study, the cognitive-behavioral play therapy intervention of Azarnioshan, Bepajouh, and Ghobari Bonab (2012) will be used in 10 45-minute sessions. Cognitive-behavioral play therapy intervention by Azarnioshan, Bepajouh and Ghobari Bonab: First session: Cartoon show, finger painting, therapist and children getting to know each other and group meeting activities, presenting rules and duties of each member, addressing the dimensions of children's behavioral, physical and cognitive signs. Second session: Playing in the school yard, examining the merits of communicating with others and doing group work, dividing work. Third session: Working with sand and making sand sculptures, strengthening and teaching verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Fourth session: Working with stones, painting on stones, examining children's physical differences and increasing self-confidence. Fifth session: Glove puppets, examining and strengthening each child's abilities and strengths. Sixth session: Tug of war, ball, balance board, identifying the four main emotions of their facial and non-verbal expressions. Seventh session: Pottery, painting on clay, examining signs and causes in diagnosing erroneous beliefs that are effective in anger. Session 8: Geometric shapes, drawing expressions of sadness, happiness, etc. Session 9: Storytelling from pictures, examining the signs and causes of fear in people. Session 10: Working with crumpled paper, introducing children to daily decisions throughout life, the importance of consulting with trusted people.
Category
Treatment - Other

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center
Name of recruitment center
Shohadaye Lolesazy Elementary School
Full name of responsible person
Keyvan Tamoradi
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Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor
Name of organization / entity
Islamic Azad University
Full name of responsible person
Pezhman Taghipor Birgani
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Farhangshahr
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Province
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Postal code
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Phone
+98 61 3334 8361
Email
p_taghipour@iauahvaz.ac.ir
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
1
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
Parviz Asgari
Position
University faculty
Latest degree
Ph.D.
Other areas of specialty/work
Psychology
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Person responsible for updating data

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Sharing plan

Deidentified Individual Participant Data Set (IPD)
Yes - There is a plan to make this available
Study Protocol

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Statistical Analysis Plan

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Informed Consent Form

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Clinical Study Report

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Analytic Code

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Data Dictionary

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Title and more details about the data/document

Data related to the main research outcome questionnaires can be shared.

When the data will become available and for how long

Access period starts 6 months after results are published.

To whom data/document is available

Researchers and scientific investigators

Under which criteria data/document could be used

In order to contribute to future research related to the study topic.

From where data/document is obtainable

fateme.askari57@gmail.com

What processes are involved for a request to access data/document

Instructions will be received via email.

Comments