Clinical Trial Protocol
Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

07 Nov 2026

Comparing the effectiveness of mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy, compassion therapy, and emotion-focused therapy on aggression, functional flexibility, perceived stress, and cognitive avoidance in aggressive seventh-grade female students

Protocol summary

Study aim

Comparing the effectiveness of mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy, compassion therapy, and emotion-focused therapy on aggression, functional flexibility, perceived stress, and cognitive avoidance in aggressive seventh-grade female students

Design

A controlled clinical trial with parallel groups, without blinding, randomized, on 80 patients. The rand function of Excel software will be used for randomization.

Settings and conduct

The statistical population of the present study consists of all aggressive seventh-grade female students in Ahvaz city who are studying in the 2025–2026 academic year. Initially, sampling will be performed using convenience sampling and according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study. After selecting samples totaling 80 individuals, participants will be randomly assigned to 4 groups: “mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy,” “compassion-focused therapy,” “emotion-focused therapy,” and “wait-list.”

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria: seventh grade female students, scoring one standard deviation above the mean in aggression. Exclusion criteria: unwillingness to participate in the research, participation in other psychotherapy sessions.

Intervention groups

Intervention group 1: All individuals who will receive mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy. Intervention group 2: All individuals who will receive compassion therapy. Intervention group 3: All individuals who will receive emotion-focused therapy. Control group: All individuals who will receive no intervention.

Main outcome variables

Aggression, functional flexibility, perceived stress, cognitive avoidance

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information

IRCT registration number: **IRCT20260425069159N1**
Registration date: **2026-04-29, 1405/02/09**
Registration timing: **prospective**

Last update: **2026-04-29, 1405/02/09**
Update count: **0**

Registration date

2026-04-29, 1405/02/09

Registrant information

Name
Azizeh Sharifi Naseri
Name of organization / entity
Country
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
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+98 61 3416 3452
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Recruitment status

Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date

2026-05-15, 1405/02/25

Expected recruitment end date

2026-05-31, 1405/03/10

Actual recruitment start date

empty

Actual recruitment end date

empty

Trial completion date

empty

Scientific title
Comparing the effectiveness of mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy, compassion therapy, and emotion-focused therapy on aggression, functional flexibility, perceived stress, and cognitive avoidance in aggressive seventh-grade female students

Public title
Investigating the effectiveness of mindfulness-based, compassion-based, and emotion-focused therapies on aggression and psychological indicators of adolescent students

Purpose
Education/Guidance

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria:
Seventh grade female students Girls aged 12 to 13 years Obtaining a score one standard deviation above the average in aggression

Exclusion criteria:

Age
From **12 years** old to **13 years** old

Gender
Female

Phase
N/A

Groups that have been masked
No information

Sample size
Target sample size: **80**

Randomization (investigator's opinion)
Randomized

Randomization description
The statistical population of the present study consists of all aggressive seventh-grade female students who are studying in the 2025–2026 academic year. In this type of effect-evaluation study, a two-stage approach is usually used: first, out of the four educational districts, two districts will be selected by simple random sampling (lottery), and then, by simple random sampling, 8 girls' lower secondary schools will be selected from each district, and in the next stage, one seventh-grade class from each school will be selected. In the sampling stage, a convenience sampling method will be used. In this way, after the students complete the aggression checklist, those whose scores on this checklist are one standard deviation above the mean, and for whom, in a clinical interview conducted by one of the clinical psychology specialists, a final diagnosis of aggression has been made, will be selected as students with aggression. After selecting the samples up to a total of 80 participants, based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study, the participants will be randomly assigned to four groups: "mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy" (intervention group 1), "compassion-focused therapy" (intervention group 2), "emotion-focused therapy" (intervention group 3), and "wait-list" (control group). Randomization will be performed using variable-size random blocks (of 4 and 6 participants) by an independent statistician who is not involved in the implementation process. The random allocation list will be generated using the RAND function in Excel software and then placed in opaque, sealed, and numbered envelopes so that the researcher and participants are unaware of the allocation sequence (allocation concealment). Opening the envelopes and becoming aware of the allocation group will only be done at the time of each participant's entry into the study. To ensure equality of baseline variables (such as anxiety level and age), their distribution in the two groups will be examined at the stage of statistical analysis.

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
Opposite Keshavarz Street, Farhang Shahr, Golestan Highway

City
Ahvaz

Province
Khouzestan

Postal code
6134937333

Approval date
2026-02-18, 1404/11/29

Ethics committee reference number
IR.IAU.AHVAZ.REC.1405.002

Health conditions studied

1

Description of health condition studied
aggression

ICD-10 code
R45.6

ICD-10 code description
Violent behavior

Primary outcomes

1

Description

Aggression

Timepoint

1. Pre-test (before the start of the intervention) 2. Post-test (immediately after the end of the intervention period) 3. One-month follow-up after the intervention

Method of measurement

The method of measurement will be using the aggression inventory of Zahedifar et al. (1379).

2

Description

Functional Flexibility

Timepoint

1. Pre-test (before the start of the intervention) 2. Post-test (immediately after the end of the intervention period) 3. One-month follow-up after the intervention

Method of measurement

The measurement method will be using the Connor and Davidson (2003) Functional Flexibility Questionnaire.

3

Description

Perceived Stress

Timepoint

1. Pre-test (before the start of the intervention) 2. Post-test (immediately after the end of the intervention period) 3. One-month follow-up after the intervention

Method of measurement

The measurement method will be using the Cohen et al. (1983) questionnaire.

4

Description

Cognitive Avoidance

Timepoint

1. Pre-test (before the start of the intervention) 2. Post-test (immediately after the end of the intervention period) 3. One-month follow-up after the intervention

Method of measurement

The measurement method will be the Sexton and Dugas (2008) Cognitive Avoidance Questionnaire.

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups

1

Description

Intervention Group 1: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Therapy. Duration of each session: 90 minutes. Total number of sessions: 8 sessions. Session frequency: Twice a week. Therapeutic tools used: Guided mindfulness exercises (e.g., body scan, breathing meditation, gentle yoga), training in mindfulness principles in daily life, and group discussions to share experiences. Content of sessions: Session 1: Introduction to mindfulness, body scan practice, fundamentals of stress. Session 2: Focus on breathing, awareness of thoughts and feelings without judgment. Session 3: Body awareness, mindfulness-based gentle yoga. Session 4: Dealing with difficult thoughts, observing thoughts as mental events. Session 5: Awareness of stress reactions, emotion management. Session 6: Mind-body connection, acceptance of unpleasant experiences. Session 7: Self-care, developing interpersonal relationships with mindfulness. Session 8: Conclusion, integrating mindfulness into life, planning for the future, and conducting the post-test.

Category

Treatment - Other

2

Description

Intervention Group 2: Compassion-Focused Therapy. Duration of each session: 90 minutes. Total number of sessions: 8 sessions. Session frequency: Twice a week.Therapeutic tools used: Guided talk therapy, mindfulness exercises (with a focus on compassion), self-compassion imagery exercises, compassion for others imagery exercises, and emotion regulation techniques. Content of sessions: Session 1: Introduction to the concept of compassion, differentiating compassion from pity, theoretical foundations of Compassion-Focused Therapy, and pre-test administration. Session 2: Identifying dysfunctional thought and behavioral patterns towards oneself, understanding the roots of self-criticism. Session 3: Practicing self-compassion imagery, using a soothing breath technique for relaxation. Session 4: Mindfulness practice for better emotional understanding, expressing empathy towards oneself and others. Session 5: Practicing writing a compassionate letter to oneself, healthy emotional release. Session 6: Pathologizing internal and external barriers to compassion (such as fear, aversion), examining factors that reduce compassion. Session 7: Teaching methods to cope with compassion barriers, practicing deep relaxation techniques. Session 8: Summarizing interventions, providing final suggestions for consistent compassion practice, administering the post-test, and scheduling a follow-up appointment.

Category

Treatment - Other

3

Description

Intervention Group 3: Emotion-Focused Therapy: Duration of each session: 90 minutes. Total number of sessions: 8 sessions. Session frequency: Twice a week. Therapeutic tools used: Emotion-focused techniques, guided talk therapy for deep exploration of emotions, experiential exercises for processing and expressing emotions, techniques for establishing safe and intimate connections, and emotion regulation exercises within the context of relationships. Session content: Session 1: Introduction to the core concepts of Emotion-Focused Therapy, understanding primary and secondary emotions, and conducting the pre-test. Session 2: Exploring and identifying dysfunctional interaction

patterns and the emotions associated with them. Session 3: Focusing on emotions hidden behind defensive behaviors, and creating a safe space for emotional expression. Session 4: Experiential processing of difficult emotions, and using experiential techniques for deeper understanding. Session 5: Reconstructing interactions with a focus on establishing secure attachment, and expressing needs and fears. Session 6: Strengthening emotional communication skills, and practicing the expression of compassion and mutual understanding. Session 7: Consolidating the changes made, and practicing conflict management with an emotion-focused approach. Session 8: Summarizing the interventions, providing strategies for maintaining and continuing healthy emotional connection, conducting the post-test, and scheduling follow-up.

Category

Treatment - Other

4

Description

Control group: The control group will not receive any type of intervention during the implementation of the research; however, in order to prevent threats to the internal validity of the study, such as compensatory rivalry of the control group or morale undermining, after data collection, they will receive the compassion-based therapy intervention.

Category

Treatment - Other

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center

Name of recruitment center

Girls' Junior High Schools in Ahvaz

Full name of responsible person

Azizeh Sharifi Naseri

Street address

No. 708, Mordad 3 St, Naft town

City

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Province

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6165745439

Phone

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Email

zohreh.sharifi2018@gmail.com

Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor

Name of organization / entity

Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person

Aslan Egdarnezhad

Street address

Opposite Keshavarz Street, 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

Private

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

Azizeh Sharifi Naseri

Position

Ph.D. student

Latest degree

Master

Other areas of specialty/work

Psychology

Street address

No. 708, Mordad 3 St, Naft town

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Person responsible for scientific

inquiries

Contact

Name of organization / entity
Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person
Azizeh Sharifi Naseri

Position
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Latest degree
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Other areas of specialty/work
Psychology

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Person responsible for updating data

Contact

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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
Not applicable

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
Not applicable

Data Dictionary
Not applicable