Clinical Trial Protocol
Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

07 Nov 2026

The effectiveness of compassion-focused therapy-based intervention on reducing feelings of defeat and improving character strengths in divorced women

Protocol summary

Study aim
Determining the effectiveness of a compassion-focused therapy-based intervention in reducing feelings of defeat and improving character strengths in divorced women.

Design
A randomized, double-blind, phase II controlled clinical trial will be conducted on 30 divorced women, and the RAND function in Excel software will be used for randomization.

Settings and conduct
In this study, a field experimental research method of the pretest-posttest design with a control group, parallel groups, and a double-blind procedure will be used. This study will be conducted in counseling centers in the city of Ahvaz. All clinical caregivers and evaluators who interpret the data will be blinded, all information will be kept confidential, and abbreviated names will be assigned to the participants.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria
Inclusion Criteria: Being between 20 and 50 years of age. At least one year having passed since the divorce. Holding at least a high school diploma. Exclusion Criteria: History of using psychotropic substances or narcotics. Presence of psychiatric disorders or the use of psychiatric medications. Having any type of physical condition that interferes with the research process.

Intervention groups
Intervention group: Compassion-focused therapy is a form of evidence-based therapy that specifically aims to cultivate compassion. This therapy emphasizes strengthening the ability to be aware of suffering, as well as the motivation and ability to alleviate or prevent it. In this study, the experimental group will undergo an intervention consisting of 8 sessions of 90-minute compassion-based therapy based on Gilbert's theory and derived from the book Compassion-Focused Therapy in Weekly Sessions (Russell Kolts et al., 2016). Control group: They will not receive any intervention.

Main outcome variables
Feelings of defeat؛ Character strengths

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information
IRCT registration number: **IRCT20260531069592N1**
Registration date: **2026-06-28, 1405/04/07**
Registration timing: **prospective**

Last update: **2026-06-28, 1405/04/07**
Update count: **0**

Registration date
2026-06-28, 1405/04/07

Registrant information
Name
Naim ghalandeh
Name of organization / entity
Country
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
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+98 916 936 5260
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Recruitment status
Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date
2026-07-11, 1405/04/20

Expected recruitment end date
2026-08-06, 1405/05/15

Actual recruitment start date
empty

Actual recruitment end date
empty
Trial completion date
empty

Scientific title
The effectiveness of compassion-focused therapy-based intervention on reducing feelings of defeat and improving character strengths in divorced women

Public title
The effectiveness of an intervention based on compassion-focused therapy
Purpose
Education/Guidance
Inclusion/Exclusion criteria
Inclusion criteria:
Being between 20 and 50 years of age. At least one year having passed since the divorce. Holding at least a high school diploma. Willingness to participate in the course.
Exclusion criteria:
History of using psychotropic substances or narcotics. Presence of psychiatric disorders or the use of psychiatric medications. Having any type of physical condition that interferes with the research process.
Age
From **20 years** old to **50 years** old
Gender
Female

Phase
N/A
Groups that have been masked

- Care provider
- Outcome assessor
- Data analyser

Sample size
Target sample size: **30**
Randomization (investigator's opinion)
Randomized
Randomization description
In this study, in order to ensure completely random allocation and eliminate any researcher interference or bias, the simple randomization method will be used. First, a complete list of women مراجعه‌کننده to the counseling center who will meet the study inclusion criteria will be prepared. Then, each of these individuals will be assigned an initial numerical identification code. These codes will be entered into the Random Number Generator software. The software will generate a unique random number for each individual. After the numbers are generated, the participants will be listed in ascending order based on the value of the random number. Then, sequentially, the first to the fifteenth individuals on the list will be assigned to the experimental group, and the sixteenth to the thirtieth individuals will be assigned to the control group. This process will be designed in such a way that the order of entry or the researcher’s familiarity with the participants will have no role in the allocation procedure, and it will not be possible to predict any individual’s group before the completion of the randomization process.
Blinding (investigator's opinion)
Double blinded
Blinding description
In this study, the clinical caregivers, the outcome assessor, and the data analyst will be blinded to the allocation of the study groups.
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
Street address
Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz, Farhang Shahr
City
Ahvaz
Province
Khouzestan
Postal code
6134937333
Approval date
2025-10-14, 1404/07/22
Ethics committee reference number
IR.IAU.AHVAZ.REC.1404.590

Health conditions studied

1

Description of health condition studied
Divorce-related problems
ICD-10 code
Z63.5
ICD-10 code description
Disruption of family by separation and divorce

Primary outcomes

1

Description
Feelings of defeat
Timepoint
before performing the intervention and two weeks after completion of the intervention
Method of measurement
Gilbert and Allan’s (1998) Defeat Scale Questionnaire

2

Description

Character strengths

Timepoint

before performing the intervention and two weeks after completion of the intervention

Method of measurement

Peterson and Seligman’s (2004) Character Strengths Questionnaire

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups

1

Description

Intervention group: The intervention group in this study will consist of divorced women who participate in eight 90-minute sessions of compassion-focused therapy. This intervention is designed based on Gilbert’s theory and adapted from the book Compassion-Focused Therapy in Weekly Sessions by Russell Kolts et al. (2016). Compassion-focused therapy is an evidence-based approach that, with the aim of cultivating compassion for oneself and others, focuses on increasing awareness of suffering, strengthening the motivation to alleviate it, and preventing the continuation of psychological injuries. Within this framework, self-compassion is defined as a three-component construct consisting of mindfulness, self-kindness, and a sense of common humanity. In the first session, initial communication with the group members is established, and the concept of compassion, the structure of sessions, and the general principles of treatment are introduced. In the second session, the three emotion regulation systems and their roles in individuals’ emotional experiences are explained, and the competitors of compassion and the necessity of the need for it are examined. In the third session, participants become familiar with the concepts of the old brain, new brain, and mindful mind, mindfulness skills are taught, and a mindful eating assignment is presented. In the fourth session, the six attributes of compassion—including sensitivity, care for well-being, empathy, sympathy, non-judgmentalism, and distress tolerance—are taught, and the characteristics of a compassionate individual, such as wisdom, responsibility, warmth, and courage, are explained. In the fifth session, compassionate reasoning and compassionate attention are taught, and compassionate self-imagery and the compassionate letter technique are introduced. In the sixth session, compassionate imagery and compassionate sensory experience are taught, emphasizing the power of imagery and its relationship with the three emotion regulation systems. In the seventh session, compassionate feeling is strengthened through practicing kindness toward oneself and others. Finally, in the eighth session, compassionate behavior—including nurturance, opportunity, structure, and challenge—is taught, and a final summary of the session content is conducted.

Category

Behavior

2

Description

Control group: They do not receive any intervention or treatment.

Category

N/A

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center

Name of recruitment center

Hami Counseling Center

Full name of responsible person

Naim ghalandeh

Street address

Unit 204, 2nd Floor, Iran Clinic Medical Complex, East Taleghani St., Next to Hosseiniyeh Sarallah

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Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor

Name of organization / entity

Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person

Aslan Egdarnejad

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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
Naim ghalandeh

Position
Master’s student

Latest degree
Bachelor

Other areas of specialty/work
Family Counseling

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Sheikh Zahrav Village, Dehkadeh Rural District, Central District, Hamidiyeh County

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Sharing plan

Deidentified Individual Participant Data Set (IPD)
No - There is not a plan to make this available

Justification/reason for indecision/not sharing IPD
Participant data is completely confidential and I do not intend to publish it.

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

Statistical Analysis Plan
No - There is not 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
No - There is not a plan to make this available

Data Dictionary
No - There is not a plan to make this available