Clinical Trial Protocol
Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

08 Nov 2026

Comparing the Effectiveness of Mode-Based Schema Therapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on Marital Intimacy, Interpersonal Relationships, Psychological Flexibility, and Resilience in Couples Seeking Divorce

Protocol summary

Study aim
To compare mode-based schema therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) in marital intimacy, interpersonal problems, psychological flexibility, and resilience among couples seeking divorce.

Design
This is a randomized, controlled, parallel-group study with pretest and posttest assessments. Couples will be allocated at the couple level in a 1:1:1 ratio. Participants and therapists will not be blinded. Drug-trial phases are not applicable.

Settings and conduct
The study will take place at Rahyab Counseling Center in Mashhad, Iran. After eligibility screening, consent, and pretest, couples will be allocated to groups. Posttest assessments will be conducted in all groups after the intervention period.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria
A total of 24 couples (48 individuals) seeking divorce in Mashhad will be recruited through convenience sampling. Inclusion criteria are informed consent, regular attendance, and no severe psychiatric disorder, active substance dependence, or concurrent specialized psychotherapy. Withdrawal, more than two missed sessions, or starting another psychological intervention are exclusion criteria.

Intervention groups
Couples will be randomly allocated to three groups of 8 couples: mode-based schema therapy, ACT, and control. Each intervention group will receive eight weekly 90-minute sessions; the control group will receive no psychological intervention during this period.

Main outcome variables
Outcomes are marital intimacy (IS), interpersonal problems (IIP-32), psychological flexibility (CompACT-23), and resilience (CD-RISC-25), assessed at pretest and posttest.

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information
IRCT registration number: **IRCT20260823070768N1**
Registration date: **2026-11-02, 1405/08/11**
Registration timing: **registered_while_recruiting**

Last update: **2026-11-02, 1405/08/11**
Update count: **0**

Registration date
2026-11-02, 1405/08/11

Registrant information

Name
Nasrin mousavinia

Name of organization / entity

Country
Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Phone
+98 51 3846 2646

Email address
nasrin.mousavinia@gmail.com

Recruitment status
recruiting

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date
2026-11-01, 1405/08/10

Expected recruitment end date
2026-11-11, 1405/08/20

Actual recruitment start date
empty

Actual recruitment end date
empty
Trial completion date
empty

Scientific title
Comparing the Effectiveness of Mode-Based Schema Therapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on Marital Intimacy, Interpersonal Relationships, Psychological Flexibility, and Resilience in Couples Seeking Divorce

Public title
Comparison of Two Psychotherapy Approaches—Mode-Based Schema Therapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy—in Couples Seeking Divorce
Purpose
Treatment
Inclusion/Exclusion criteria
Inclusion criteria:
Couples seeking divorce (both spouses) referred to Rahyab Counseling Center in Mashhad Providing informed consent to participate in the study Having the necessary ability to participate in and cooperate with the intervention sessions Absence of severe mental disorders or major psychiatric conditions that would prevent effective participation in the study Absence of active alcohol or substance dependence Not receiving concurrent specialized psychotherapy Willingness to attend sessions regularly and complete therapeutic assignments
Exclusion criteria:
Lack of informed consent to participate in the study. Presence of a severe mental disorder or major psychiatric disorder that prevents effective participation in the study. Presence of a personality disorder based on the criteria specified in the study protocol. Active dependence on alcohol or drugsConcurrent receipt of specialized psychotherapy
Age
From **18 years** old to **60 years** old
Gender
Both

Phase
N/A
Groups that have been masked
No information
Sample size
Target sample size: **48**
Randomization (investigator's opinion)
Randomized
Randomization description
After eligibility screening, obtaining informed consent, and completing the pretest, 24 eligible couples will be enrolled using convenience sampling. The couple will serve as the unit of random allocation, and both spouses will remain in the same group. Each couple will be assigned a unique identification code. The 24 couple codes will then be arranged using a computer-generated random sequence. Based on this sequence, the couples will be allocated equally to three groups: 8 couples to the mode-based schema therapy group, 8 couples to the acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) group, and 8 couples to the control group. Random allocation will take place after recruitment and pretest assessment and before the interventions begin.
Blinding (investigator's opinion)
Not blinded
Blinding description
Placebo
Not used
Assignment
Parallel
Other design features
The current research is practical in terms of purpose and semi-experimental in terms of method, which will be conducted using a pre-test-post-test design with a control group. The number of 24 couples applying for divorce (48 people) were selected through available sampling and after checking the entry and exit criteria and obtaining informed consent, they were randomly assigned to three groups including two experimental groups and a control group, each group consisting of 8 couples. And the control group will not receive psychological intervention during the implementation of the interventions. The research variables are evaluated in two phases: pre-test and post-test.

Secondary Ids

empty

Ethics committees

1

Ethics committee
Name of ethics committee
Research Ethics Committee of Islamic Azad University, Neyshabur Branch*
Street address
Islamic Azad University, Neyshabur Branch, Pazhuhesh Blvd, Neyshabur, Razavi Khorasan, Iran
City
Neyshabur
Province
Razavi Khorasan
Postal code
9319613668
Approval date
2026-03-16, 1404/12/25
Ethics committee reference number
IR.IAU.NEYSHABUR.REC.1404.091

Health conditions studied

1

Description of health condition studied
Problems in relationship with spouse or partner
ICD-10 code
Z63.0
ICD-10 code description
Problems in relationship with spouse or partner

Primary outcomes

1

Description
Marital Intimacy
Timepoint
Pretest (before the intervention) and posttest (after completion of the 8 intervention sessions).
Method of measurement
Marital intimacy will be assessed using the Marital Intimacy Scale. The total scale score will be used as an indicator of marital intimacy, with higher scores indicating greater marital intimacy.

Secondary outcomes

1

Description
Interpersonal Problems
Timepoint
Pretest (before the intervention) and posttest (after completion of the 8 intervention sessions).
Method of measurement
Interpersonal problems will be assessed using the 32-item Inventory of Interpersonal Problems (IIP-32). Higher scores indicate greater interpersonal problems.

2

Description
Psychological Flexibility
Timepoint
Pretest (before the intervention) and posttest (after completion of the 8 intervention sessions).
Method of measurement
Psychological flexibility will be assessed using the 23-item Comprehensive Assessment of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Processes (CompACT-23). Higher scores indicate greater psychological flexibility.

3

Description
Resilience
Timepoint
Pretest (before the intervention) and posttest (after completion of the 8 intervention sessions).
Method of measurement
Resilience will be assessed using the 25-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25). Higher scores indicate greater resilience.

Intervention groups

1

Description
Intervention Group 1: Mode-based schema therapy. Couples will receive eight weekly 90-minute sessions of mode-based schema therapy. The intervention focuses on identifying and modifying maladaptive schema modes and improving emotional regulation and interpersonal functioning.
Category
Behavior

2

Description
Intervention Group 2: Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). Couples will receive eight weekly 90-minute sessions of ACT, focusing on psychological flexibility through acceptance, cognitive defusion, present-moment awareness, values clarification, and committed action.
Category
Behavior

3

Description
Control Group: Couples will not receive any psychological intervention from the study team during the eight-week intervention period. They will complete the pretest and posttest assessments at the same time points as the intervention groups.
Category
Behavior

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center
Name of recruitment center
Rahyab Psychological Clinic
Full name of responsible person
Hossein Shareh
Street address
Shahid Chamran Street, Chamran 9, Neshan Salamat Building, 2nd Floor, Unit 201
City
Mashhad
Province
Razavi Khorasan
Postal code
917 593 4745
Phone
+98 51 3838 3193
Email
nasrin2022mousavinia@gmail.com

Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor
Name of organization / entity
Islamic Azad University
Full name of responsible person
Hossein Zeraatkar
Street address

End of Pazhuhesh Boulevard, Some'eh Road, Neyshabur, Iran

City
Neyshabur

Province
Razavi Khorasan

Postal code
۹۳۱۹۹۷۵۸۵۳

Phone
+98 51 4262 1901

Email
Neyshabur@iau-neyshabur.ac.ir

Web page address
https://neyshabur.iau.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
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
Seyedeh Nasrin Mousavinia

Position
Clinical Psychologist and University Lecturer

Latest degree
Ph.D.

Other areas of specialty/work
Psychology

Street address
Kuhsangi Street

City
Holy Mashhad

Province
Razavi Khorasan

Postal code
917 593 4745

Phone
+98 51 3846 2328

Email
nasrin2022mousavinia@gmail.com

Person responsible for scientific inquiries

Contact

Name of organization / entity
Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person
Seyedeh Nasrin Mousavinia

Position
Clinical Psychologist and University Lecturer

Latest degree
Ph.D.

Other areas of specialty/work
Psychology

Street address
Kuhsangi Street

City
Mashahd

Province
Razavi Khorasan

Postal code
917 593 4745

Phone
+98 51 3846 2328

Email
nasrin2022mousavinia@gmail.com

Person responsible for updating data

Contact

Name of organization / entity
Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person
Seyedeh Nasrin Mousavinia

Position
PhD Student in Psychology

Latest degree
Master

Other areas of specialty/work
Psychology

Street address
Kohsangi32

City
Mashhad

Province
Razavi Khorasan

Postal code
917 593 4745

Phone
+98 51 3846 2328

Email
nasrin2022mousavinia@gmail.com

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
Individual participant data will not be shared publicly due to the need to protect participants' confidentiality and privacy and the sensitive nature of individual and marital information.

Study Protocol

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Statistical Analysis Plan

No - There is not a plan to make this available

Informed Consent Form

No - There is not a plan to make this available

Clinical Study Report

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Analytic Code

Not applicable

Data Dictionary

Not applicable

Title and more details about the data/document

Study protocol and clinical study report of the intervention trial of mode-based schema therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) in divorce-seeking couples.

When the data will become available and for how long

After publication of the study article and upon approval of an access request.

To whom data/document is available

Qualified researchers and academic investigators whose requests are approved by the principal investigator.

Under which criteria data/document could be used

The documents may be used for research and academic purposes, subject to confidentiality, intellectual property rights, and research ethics requirements.

From where data/document is obtainable

Access requests should be submitted to the principal investigator, Seyedeh Nasrin Mousavi Nia.

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

A written request including the applicant’s identity, institutional affiliation, intended purpose, and requested document will be submitted and reviewed by the principal investigator. Access will be provided after approval and subject to confidentiality and research ethics requirements.

Comments

Identifiable participant information and individual-level participant data will not be publicly released.