

Clinical Trial Protocol

Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

05 Aug 2026

Comparison of the effectiveness of emotion-focused therapy (EFT) with metacognitive therapy (MCT) on emotional-social competence, communication skills and depression of 13- to 18-year-old male students in divorced families

Protocol summary

Study aim

The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of emotion-focused therapy and cognitive-behavioural therapy on emotional-social competence, communication skills, and depression of male students aged 13 to 18 from divorced families in Tehran's District 5 who had not received separate psychotherapy.

Design

This clinical trial was parallel, Not blinded, randomized, and with 45 participants.

Settings and conduct

Research method: semi-experimental research, research objective: applied research. The study was conducted in two high schools for boys. Two experimental groups of MCT and EFT and a control group were determined. A pre-test was taken from all groups. Then the intervention was done for two experimental groups. After ten sessions, the post-test was taken again from all three groups. After three months of the post-test, a follow-up test was taken from all groups to measure the durability of the intervention effect.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria were male students, aged 13 to 18, residing in Tehran's District 5, having divorced parents, and not receiving separate psychotherapy. The exclusion criteria were lack of student willingness, parents' dissatisfaction, and use of psychotropic drugs.

Intervention groups

Group A received cognitive-behavioural therapy based on the standard protocol for depression consisting of eight 90-minute sessions. Group B received emotion-focused therapy based on Greenberg's therapeutic guide (including three stages of preparation, awareness, and experiencing) consisting of eight 90-minute sessions. The control group did not receive any intervention.

Main outcome variables

Changes in emotional-social competence, changes in communication skills, and changes in the level of depression.

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information

IRCT registration number: **IRCT20230727058940N1**

Registration date: **2023-08-29, 1402/06/07**

Registration timing: **retrospective**

Last update: **2023-08-29, 1402/06/07**

Update count: **0**

Registration date

2023-08-29, 1402/06/07

Registrant information

Name

Mohammad Parnov

Name of organization / entity

Country

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

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Recruitment status

Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date

2022-04-03, 1401/01/14

Expected recruitment end date

2022-04-09, 1401/01/20

Actual recruitment start date

2022-04-03, 1401/01/14

Actual recruitment end date

2022-04-09, 1401/01/20

Trial completion date

2022-11-08, 1401/08/17

Scientific title

Comparison of the effectiveness of emotion-focused therapy (EFT) with metacognitive therapy (MCT) on emotional-social competence, communication skills and depression of 13- to 18-year-old male students in divorced families

Public title

Effectiveness of emotion-focused therapy (EFT) and metacognitive therapy (MCT) on adolescents

Purpose

Education/Guidance

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria**Inclusion criteria:**

He should be male He should be a student He should be between thirteen and eighteen years old He should reside in the five municipalities district of Tehran His parents should be separated (divorced) He should be interested and motivated to participate in therapy He should not participate in psychotherapy or other psychological interventions simultaneously

Exclusion criteria:

Irregular attendance at sessions Consumption of psychoactive substances

Age

From **13 years** old to **18 years** old

Gender

Male

Phase

N/A

Groups that have been masked

No information

Sample size

Target sample size: **45**

Actual sample size reached: **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**

Research Ethics Committees of Birjand University of Medical Sciences

Street address

No. 7, Farhadiyeh Dead-end, Towhid St.

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1457896351

Approval date

2023-04-17, 1402/01/28

Ethics committee reference number

IR.BUMS.REC.1402.049

Health conditions studied**1****Description of health condition studied**

Depression

ICD-10 code

F32.0

ICD-10 code description

Major depressive disorder, single episode, mild

Primary outcomes**1****Description**

Emotional-social competence : refers to an individual's ability to control their own motivations, make good judgments, and regulate their emotions in response to the emotions and reactions of others.

Timepoint

Before starting the intervention, nine weeks after starting the intervention, and twenty-one weeks after starting the intervention.

Method of measurement

Social Emotional Competencies Questionnaire, Zhou and Ee (2012)

2**Description**

Communication skills: are a set of abilities that enable individuals to engage in interpersonal interactions and the communication process, whereby individuals exchange information, ideas, and emotions through verbal and nonverbal messages.

Timepoint

Before starting the intervention, nine weeks after starting the intervention, and twenty-one weeks after starting the intervention.

Method of measurement

Communication Skills Test-Revised, Queendom (2004)

3

Description

Depression: is a term used to describe a set of behaviors characterized by slowness in movement and speech, crying, sadness, lack of active responses, loss of interest, feelings of worthlessness, insomnia, and loss of appetite.

Timepoint

Before starting the intervention, nine weeks after starting the intervention, and twenty-one weeks after starting the intervention.

Method of measurement

Children's Depression Inventory, Maria Kovacs (1979)

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups

1

Description

Intervention Group 1: Cognitive-behavioral therapy; The present study is based on the standard cognitive-behavioral therapy protocol for depression, consisting of eight 90-minute sessions.

Category

Behavior

2

Description

Intervention Group 2: Emotion-focused therapy; The present study is based on the standard emotion-focused therapy protocol based on Greenberg's therapeutic guide (including three stages of preparation, awareness, and experiencing) consisting of eight 90-minute sessions.

Category

Behavior

3

Description

Control Group: No intervention was performed on this group in the present study.

Category

Other

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center

Name of recruitment center

Kohan Highschool

Full name of responsible person

Mohammad Parnov

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Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor

Name of organization / entity

Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person

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Web page address

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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

1

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

Mohammad Parnov

Position

PhD candidate of Clinical Psychology

Latest degree

Ph.D.

Other areas of specialty/work

Psychology

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Person responsible for scientific inquiries**Contact****Name of organization / entity**

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Latest degree

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Other areas of specialty/work

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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

The information of the study participants is confidential.

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

No - There is not a plan to make this available

Clinical Study Report

No - There is not a plan to make this available

Analytic Code

No - There is not a plan to make this available

Data Dictionary

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