Clinical Trial Protocol
Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

07 Nov 2026

Investigating the effectiveness of mentalization therapy on metacognitive beliefs, rejection sensitivity, emotion of shame, and psycho-social flexibility between the individuals with avoidant personality syndrome.

Protocol summary

Study aim

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of Mentalization-Based Therapy on metacognitive beliefs, rejection sensitivity, shame, and psychosocial flexibility in individuals with avoidant personality Syndrome.

Design

The research method in this study follows an experimental design, including a pre-test, post-test, and a two-month follow-up with a control group. Group assignment is done randomly.

Settings and conduct

The intervention was conducted at Didar Clinic in Isfahan. Sessions were held twice a week. Participants were randomly assigned to groups.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Entry Criteria: Having symptoms of avoidant personality disorder, being aged between 20-40 years, and possessing at least a high school diploma. Exclusion Criteria: Presence of psychological disorders such as bipolar disorder with manic or hypomanic episodes or a history of schizophrenia diagnosis; substance use disorders (abuse or dependence) in the past 6 months; active suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts in the past 6 months; intellectual disability or borderline intelligence (IQ < 70 or clinical diagnosis); inability to read, write, or complete questionnaires; receiving individual psychotherapy during the screening period; unwillingness or inability to provide informed and voluntary consent.

Intervention groups

Intervention Group Participants undergo mentalization-based treatment. The treatment consists of 8 to 10 weekly group sessions, focusing on improving the ability to understand one's own and others' mental states, emotion regulation, and reducing avoidance patterns and shame-based behaviors. Control Group Participants in this group do not receive any active therapeutic intervention during the study period. They are only assessed during the pre-test and post-test phases.

Main outcome variables

Severity of Avoidant Personality Disorder

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information

IRCT registration number: **IRCT20251020067691N1**
Registration date: **2025-11-19, 1404/08/28**
Registration timing: **prospective**

Last update: **2025-11-19, 1404/08/28**
Update count: **0**

Registration date

2025-11-19, 1404/08/28

Registrant information

Name

Farid Manouchehry

Name of organization / entity

Country

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Phone

+98 913 294 4969

Email address

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Recruitment status

Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date

2025-11-22, 1404/09/01

Expected recruitment end date

2026-02-20, 1404/12/01

Actual recruitment start date

empty

Actual recruitment end date

empty

Trial completion date

empty

Scientific title

Investigating the effectiveness of mentalization therapy on metacognitive beliefs, rejection sensitivity, emotion of shame, and psycho-social flexibility between the individuals with avoidant personality syndrome.

Public title

The effectiveness of mentalization therapy on improving negative metacognitive beliefs, rejection sensitivity, and feelings of shame in individuals with avoidant personality traits

Purpose

Treatment

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria:

including avoidant personality syndrome Age between 20-40 y.o. Having at least a high school diploma

Exclusion criteria:

Presence of psychological disorders such as bipolar disorder with manic or hypomanic episodes, or a history of schizophrenia diagnosis. Presence of substance use disorder (abuse or dependence) within the past six months. Presence of active suicidal ideation or a suicide attempt within the past six months. Presence of intellectual disability or borderline intellectual functioning (IQ < 70 or clinical diagnosis). Inability to read, write, or complete self-report questionnaires. Receiving individual psychotherapy at the time of screening. Lack of willingness or inability to provide voluntary and informed consent.

Age

From **20 years** old to **40 years** old

Gender

Both

Phase

N/A

Groups that have been masked

No information

Sample size

Target sample size: **30**

Randomization (investigator's opinion)

Randomized

Randomization description

Participants will be allocated to either the intervention or control group using simple randomization. After confirming eligibility and obtaining informed consent, each participant will be assigned a random number between 0 and 1 generated by a computer program (Excel) . Participants with a number ≤ 0.5 will be placed in the intervention group, and those with a number > 0.5 in the control group. To ensure unbiased allocation, the randomization sequence will be generated by an independent researcher not involved in recruitment. The sequence will be stored in a coded list to maintain allocation concealment. The principal investigator responsible for participant enrollment will remain unaware of group assignments until allocation. Whenever possible, the post-test outcome assessor will be blinded to group allocation to minimize assessment bias.

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 Najafabad

Street address

Islamic Azad University of Najafabad., Daneshgah Blvd., Najafabad., Isfahan., Iran.

City

Najafabad

Province

Isfehan

Postal code

۸۵۱۴۱۴۳۱۳۱

Approval date

2025-07-31, 1404/05/09

Ethics committee reference number

IR.IAU.NAJAFABAD.REC.1404.177

Health conditions studied

1

Description of health condition studied

Avoidant Personality Syndrome

ICD-10 code

F60.6

ICD-10 code description

Avoidant personality disorder

Primary outcomes

1

Description

Severity of Avoidant Personality Disorder

Timepoint

Before the intervention, immediately after the intervention, and two months after the intervention

Method of measurement

Avoidant Personality Disorder Severity Index

Secondary outcomes

1

Description
Metacognitive Beliefs
Timepoint
Before, immediately after, and two months after the intervention
Method of measurement
Meta-Cognition Questionnaire(MCQ-30)

2

Description
Rejection Sensitivity
Timepoint
Before, immediately after, and two months after the intervention
Method of measurement
Interpersonal sensitivity Questionnaire(IPSM-32)

3

Description
Shame Emotion
Timepoint
Before, immediately after, and two months after the intervention
Method of measurement
Guilt and Shame Proneness scale(GASP)

4

Description
Psycho-Social Flexibility
Timepoint
Before, immediately after, and two months after the intervention
Method of measurement
Multidimensional Psychological Flexibility Inventory-24

Intervention groups

1

Description
Intervention group: Mental Reconstruction-Based Therapy Group: The goal of mental reconstruction-based therapy is to establish balance in addressing the issues of individuals with avoidant personality disorder symptoms by enhancing their capacity for awareness of mental states influenced by dysfunctional metacognitive beliefs, sensitivity to rejection, feelings of shame, and their level of psychological-social flexibility. The interventions lasted for 8 weeks. Sessions were held twice a week, each lasting two hours. The sessions included the following topics: the concept of mental reconstruction, understanding problems related to mental reconstruction, why we have emotions and their basic types, how to record and regulate emotions, the relationship between mental reconstruction and emotions, the importance of mental reconstruction, the concept of personality disorders and avoidant personality disorder, and the application of mental reconstruction-based therapy.
Category
Treatment - Other

2

Description
Control group: No psychotherapy intervention: Subjects in this group did not receive individual or group psychological interventions.
Category
N/A

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center
Name of recruitment center
Didar Psychological Clinic
Full name of responsible person
Dr. Gholamreza Talebi
Street address
2nd floor,. No.44,. Amin Alley,. In front of Seyyed al-shohada Hospital,. Shiri Bridge
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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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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
Farid Manouchehry

Position
M.A. Student in Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychology, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad Univer

Latest degree
Bachelor

Other areas of specialty/work
Psychology

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Person responsible for scientific inquiries

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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

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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)
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
Demographic data and primary outcome results of the study can be shared after anonymization and ensuring individuals' privacy.

When the data will become available and for how long

Data can be made available 4 months after publication of the results and after the removal of personal identifying information.

To whom data/document is available

Data and study documentation will be available to researchers and scholars working at reputable academic and scientific institutions.

Under which criteria data/document could be used

Research data and documentation are available for scientific and research purposes. Users must commit to keeping non-identifiable data confidential.

From where data/document is obtainable

For data inquiries, please contact via email at farid.manouchehry97@gmail.com.

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

After receiving the request and reviewing it by the researcher, a response will be provided as soon as possible.

Comments