Clinical Trial Protocol
Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

07 Nov 2026

Study of the effectiveness of couple therapy based on acceptance and commitment on distress tolerance, rumination, and marital adjustment of couples with marital conflicts referring to psychological counseling centers

Protocol summary

Study aim
To compare the effectiveness of couple therapy based on acceptance and commitment on distress tolerance, rumination, and marital adjustment of couples with marital conflicts referring to psychological counseling centers

Design
A clinical trial with a control group, using parallel groups, without blinding, randomized, on 40 patients. For randomization, the RAND function of Excel software will be used.

Settings and conduct
The statistical population of the research includes all couples with marital conflicts referring to the psychological counseling center in Ahvaz city during the period of April 2026. In the sample selection stage, a convenience sampling method is used. After selecting a sample of 40 individuals (20 couples) based on the research's inclusion and exclusion criteria, participants will be randomly assigned to two groups: an intervention group and a control group.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria
Inclusion Criteria: Couples who have been married for a maximum of 3 to 5 years, couples experiencing marital conflicts with accurate diagnostic criteria. Exclusion Criteria: Individuals unwilling to participate in the study, participation in other psychotherapy sessions.

Intervention groups
Intervention Group: All couples who will receive the Acceptance and Commitment Couples Therapy intervention.The therapeutic sessions will follow the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy protocol by Hayes and Strosschneider (2010). These intervention sessions will consist of 8 sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, conducted over the course of one month. Control Group: The control group will not receive any type of intervention during the research execution.

Main outcome variables
Distress Tolerance, Rumination, Marital Adjustment

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information
IRCT registration number: **IRCT20260315068992N1**
Registration date: **2026-03-18, 1404/12/27**
Registration timing: **prospective**

Last update: **2026-03-18, 1404/12/27**
Update count: **0**

Registration date
2026-03-18, 1404/12/27

Registrant information

Name
Azam Safari

Name of organization / entity

Country
Iran (Islamic Republic of)

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+98 61 5233 2752

Email address
azzm.safari@iau.ir

Recruitment status
Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date
2026-04-04, 1405/01/15

Expected recruitment end date
2026-04-20, 1405/01/31

Actual recruitment start date
empty
Actual recruitment end date
empty
Trial completion date
empty

Scientific title
Study of the effectiveness of couple therapy based on acceptance and commitment on distress tolerance, rumination, and marital adjustment of couples with marital conflicts referring to psychological counseling centers

Public title
Acceptance and Commitment Couple Therapy for Relationship Improvement
Purpose
Treatment
Inclusion/Exclusion criteria
Inclusion criteria:
Married couples with a duration of marriage not exceeding 3 to 5 years Scoring above the average on the rumination questionnaire Scoring below average on marital adjustment and distress tolerance Couples must have marital conflicts and meet diagnostic criteria
Exclusion criteria:
Individuals unwilling to participate in the study participation in other psychotherapy sessions
Age
From **20 years** old to **35 years** old
Gender
Both

Phase
N/A
Groups that have been masked
No information
Sample size
Target sample size: **40**
Randomization (investigator's opinion)
Randomized
Randomization description
The statistical population of the study includes all couples with marital conflicts referred to the psychological counseling center during the period of April 2026. In this type of impact assessment study, a two-stage approach is usually used. In the sample selection stage, a convenience sampling method is used. After selecting samples totaling 40 individuals (20 couples) based on the research inclusion and exclusion criteria, participants will be randomly assigned to two groups: intervention and control. Randomization will be performed using the method of random block sizes (4 and 6 persons) by an independent statistician who is not involved in the implementation process. The randomization allocation list will be generated using the RAND function in Excel software so that the researcher and participants are unaware of the allocation sequence. To ensure the equality of baseline variables, their distribution in the two groups will be examined at the statistical analysis stage.
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
2026-02-21, 1404/12/02
Ethics committee reference number
IR.IAU.AHVAZ.REC.1404.678

Health conditions studied

1

Description of health condition studied
Marital Conflicts
ICD-10 code
F43.2
ICD-10 code description
Adjustment disorders

Primary outcomes

1

Description
Distress Tolerance
Timepoint
1. Pre-test (before the intervention begins). 2. Post-test (immediately after the intervention period ends). 3. One-month follow-up after the intervention
Method of measurement
The measurement tool will be the Simons and Gaher Distress Tolerance Questionnaire (2005).

2

Description

Rumination

Timepoint

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

Method of measurement

The measurement tool will be the Nolen-Hoeksema and Morrow (1991) Rumination Questionnaire.

3

Description

Marital Adjustment

Timepoint

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

Method of measurement

The measurement tool will be Spanier's Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (1976).

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups

1

Description

Intervention group: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) based couples therapy. Session Duration: 90 minutes. Total Number of Sessions: 8 sessions. Session Frequency: Twice a week. Therapeutic Tools Used: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), including mindfulness, acceptance, defusion, values clarification, and committed actions. Session Content: Session 1: Pre-test; Introduction to ACT and the concept of "Creative Hopelessness." Session 2: Identifying marital problems from an ACT perspective; beginning values exploration. Session 3: Practicing acceptance of difficult thoughts and feelings; mindfulness. Session 4: Deepening values; linking values to behavior. Session 5: Defusion techniques for observing thoughts. Session 6: Planning committed actions; overcoming obstacles. Session 7: Strengthening value-based connections; practicing new skills. Session 8: Post-test; wrap-up; follow-up planning.

Category

Treatment - Other

2

Description

Control group: The control group will not receive any intervention during the implementation of the research. However, to prevent threats to the internal validity of the research, such as compensatory rivalry of the control group or demoralization, they will receive the intervention after data collection.

Category

Treatment - Other

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center

Name of recruitment center

Rayan Psychological counseling centers in the city of Ahvaz

Full name of responsible person

Azam Safari

Street address

Qaem 1 Alley, Khorramshahr Street

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Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor

Name of organization / entity

Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person

Nahid Hossain Abasi

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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
Azam Safari
Position
Master's student
Latest degree
Bachelor
Other areas of specialty/work
Psychology
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Qaem 1 Alley, Khorramshahr Street
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Person responsible for scientific inquiries

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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