

Clinical Trial Protocol

Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

11 Sep 2026

The Effectiveness of Non-Directive Play Therapy Training on Loneliness, Social Anxiety, and Aggression in Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Protocol summary

Study aim

Determining the effectiveness of non-directive play therapy training on loneliness, social anxiety, and aggression in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Design

The clinical trial will use a pretest-posttest design with experimental and control groups, and individuals will be randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups.

Settings and conduct

This study is an experimental study with a pretest-posttest design and a control group. The statistical population consists of children with hyperactivity who refer to a psychological treatment center in Ahvaz. Thirty children are randomly selected and assigned to two groups: experimental (15 participants) and control (15 participants). The experimental group receives 8 sessions of non-directive play therapy based on the Kaduson and Schaefer (2001) protocol.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria Be between 7 and 11 years old. Have a diagnosis of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) confirmed by a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist based on DSM-5 criteria. Be enrolled in elementary school (grades one to five). Exclusion Criteria Have a severe physical problem that interferes with the research process. Have a confirmed diagnosis of another disorder besides ADHD, such as severe anxiety disorders, other unrelated behavioral disorders, or neuropsychological disorders that may affect the results. Have severe physical or psychological problems that impair participation in sessions, such as severe motor disability, speech impairment, or serious cognitive disorders.

Intervention groups

Intervention Group: Non-directive play therapy; participants will receive non-directive play therapy sessions over 8 sessions, according to the Kaduson and Schaefer (2001) protocol. Control Group: They will not receive any intervention.

Main outcome variables

Loneliness; Social Anxiety; Aggression.

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information

IRCT registration number: **IRCT20260501069223N1**

Registration date: **2026-05-05, 1405/02/15**

Registration timing: **prospective**

Last update: **2026-05-05, 1405/02/15**

Update count: **0**

Registration date

2026-05-05, 1405/02/15

Registrant information

Name

Mahsa Heidari

Name of organization / entity

Country

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Phone

+98 930 749 8065

Email address

mahsaheidari980000@yahoo.com

Recruitment status

Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date

2026-06-05, 1405/03/15

Expected recruitment end date

2026-07-06, 1405/04/15

Actual recruitment start date

empty

Actual recruitment end date

empty

Trial completion date

empty

Scientific title

The Effectiveness of Non-Directive Play Therapy Training on Loneliness, Social Anxiety, and Aggression in Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Public title

The Effectiveness of Play Therapy Training

Purpose

Education/Guidance

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria**Inclusion criteria:**

Be between 7 and 11 years old. Have a diagnosis of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) confirmed by a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist based on DSM-5 criteria. Be enrolled in elementary school (grades one to five). Have the cognitive and communicative ability to participate in group or individual play therapy sessions.

Exclusion criteria:

Have a severe physical problem that interferes with the research process. Have a confirmed diagnosis of another disorder besides ADHD, such as severe anxiety disorders, other unrelated behavioral disorders, or neuropsychological disorders that may affect the results. Participate in other therapeutic, psychological training, or play therapy programs during the study period. Have severe physical or psychological problems that impair participation in sessions, such as severe motor disability, speech impairment, or serious cognitive disorders. Have sensory problems or specific disabilities that interfere with play therapy activities (such as visual or hearing impairments, or severe physical disabilities without possible adaptation).

Age

From **7 years** old to **11 years** old

Gender

Both

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 achieve completely random allocation and eliminate any researcher involvement or bias, the simple randomization method will be used. First, a complete list of children referred to the

counseling center who meet the inclusion criteria for the study will be prepared. Then, an initial numerical identification code will be assigned to each of these individuals. These codes will be entered into a 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 process, and it will not be possible to predict the group of any individual before the completion of randomization.

Blinding (investigator's opinion)

Double blinded

Blinding description

In this study, clinical caregivers, the outcome assessor, and data analysts are blinded to the study group allocation, and the information will be coded.

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

2026-02-28, 1404/12/09

Ethics committee reference number

IR.IAU.AHVAZ.REC.1405.007

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

Hyperactivity

ICD-10 code

F90

ICD-10 code description

Primary outcomes

1

Description

Loneliness

Timepoint

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

Method of measurement

Asher and Wheeler's Loneliness Questionnaire (1985)

2

Description

Social anxiety

Timepoint

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

Method of measurement

Reynolds and Richmond Social Anxiety Questionnaire (1978)

3

Description

Aggression

Timepoint

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

Method of measurement

Eysenck and Wilson Aggression Questionnaire (1975)

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups

1

Description

Intervention group: Non-directive play therapy is an approach that allows the child to freely express his or her feelings and problems during play without direct guidance from the therapist. In this method, the therapist mainly plays the role of an observer and supporter and only provides a safe and accepting environment so that the child can express himself or herself in a natural way. The aim of this method is to strengthen the child's self-confidence, self-awareness, and resolution of psychological problems through experience and free expression in the play setting. In this study, non-directive play therapy sessions will be conducted in 8 sessions, according to the Kaduson and Schaefer (2001) protocol.

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

Rayan Counseling and Psychological Center

Full name of responsible person

Mahsa Heidari

Street address

1st floor, Mahtab Complex, between East 4th and 5th Streets, Kianpars.

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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
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Full name of responsible person
Mahsa Heidari
Position
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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