



Comparison of the effectiveness of self-compassion training and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy on parenting stress and experiential avoidance in mothers with slow-paced children

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Abstract

Aim: The present study was conducted with the aim of comparing the effectiveness of self-compassion-based training and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy on parenting stress and experiential avoidance in mothers with slow-paced children.

Methods: The current research was an experimental type with a pre-test-post-test design and follow-up with a control group. The statistical population of the current study included all mothers with slow-walking children who lived in Tehran in the winter of 2018 and their children were covered by exceptional educational centers, from which 45 mothers were selected using a targeted sampling method. And randomly, 15 people were placed in two experimental groups and control group. In order to collect data, Abidin's parental stress index questionnaire (1995) and Bund et al.'s acceptance and action questionnaire (2011) were used. Educational sessions based on self-compassion based on the protocol of Gilbert et al. (2014) and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy based on the protocol of Frances, Shavier, Cain, Anticott and Mito (2020), during eight 90-minute sessions weekly and it was implemented for two months. Analysis of variance with repeated measurements and spss software were used to analyze the data. **Results:** The results showed that training based on self-compassion and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy on parenting stress ($F=90.04, P<0.001$) and experiential avoidance ($F=48.56, P<0.001$) was effective in mothers with slow-paced children, but there was no significant difference between the two interventions. **Conclusion:** Therefore, it is possible to use self-compassion training and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy to help mothers with slow-paced children.

Keywords: self-compassion, mindfulness therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, parenting stress, experiential avoidance.

Introduction

One of the other variables that seems to be related to the mental state of families with slow-moving children is experiential avoidance. Experiential avoidance is controlling or minimizing the impact of distressing experiences and can provide immediate and short-term relief that negatively reinforces behavior. This avoidance will become problematic when it interferes with daily functioning and achieving one's life goals (Eifert et al., 2009).

The mental health of families depends on the mental health of each family member, especially the parents. In general, the birth of a child causes different reactions from the parents, especially when the child is born with Natwine (Geraldo et al., 2010). The birth of an exceptional child affects all family members in addition to the parents (Halahan, Kaufman, & Poulin, 2014). A look at recent research shows that attention to the issue of parent-child relationships has been increasingly paid attention to by psychologists (Hawk, Kissman, & Ortaglia, 2015; Martinez et al., 2015; Lee, 2016). In the meantime, because of the traditional role of caregiving, mothers assume more responsibilities for their exceptional children, and as a result, face more pressures and psychological problems (McConkey, Kennedy, and Cheng, 2007). Jan Gergiri, Darbani, and Parsakia (2020) showed that self-compassion has a significant relationship with family health (Jan Gergiri, Darbani, and Parsakia, 2020).

Therefore, the current research is important both theoretically and practically. Families with weak or disabled children are exposed to all kinds of discomforts and problems that are effective in maintaining and taking care of their child's condition. It causes the family to lose its normal life process and the continuation of this situation may lead to the collapse of the family system or rejection of the disabled child. This is especially important for mothers who interact more with their children. As a result, considering the lack of past research on the health and psychological characteristics of the mothers of these children, it seems necessary to conduct research to help improve their living conditions. Therefore, the aim of the current research is to compare the effectiveness of self-compassion-based training and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy on parenting stress and experiential avoidance in mothers with slow-paced children. The current research sought to answer the following questions:

1. Was training based on self-compassion and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy effective on parenting stress and experiential avoidance in mothers with slow-paced children in the post-test phase?
2. Was training based on self-compassion and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy on parenting stress and experiential avoidance in mothers with a slow-paced child stable in the follow-up phase?

Method

The current research was an experimental type with a pre-test-post-test design and follow-up with a control group. The statistical population of the current study included all mothers with slow-walking children who lived in Tehran in the winter of 2018 and their children were covered by exceptional educational centers, from which 45 mothers were selected using a targeted sampling method. And randomly, 15 people were placed in two experimental groups and control group. In order to collect data, Abidin's parental stress index questionnaire (1995) and Bund et al.'s

acceptance and action questionnaire (2011) were used. Educational sessions based on self-compassion based on the protocol of Gilbert et al. (2014) and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy based on the protocol of Frances, Shavir, Cain, Anticott and Mitoş (2020), during eight 90-minute sessions weekly and it was implemented for two months. Analysis of variance with repeated measurements and spss software were used to analyze the data.

Results

The results showed that training based on self-compassion and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy on parenting stress ($F=90.04$, $P<0.001$) and experiential avoidance ($F=48.56$, $P<0.001$) was effective in mothers with slow-paced children, but there was no significant difference between the two interventions.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to compare the effectiveness of self-compassion-based training and integrated mindfulness-cognitive behavioral therapy on parenting stress and experiential avoidance in mothers with slow-paced children. The results showed that CFT and MiCBT have an effect on parenting stress and experiential avoidance of mothers with slow-paced children. Also, there was no difference between the effectiveness of these two approaches.

According to the obtained results, it can be suggested that in counseling centers and especially in schools and care centers for disabled children, in addition to paying attention to these children, attention should also be paid to the psychological characteristics of mothers. It is also suggested that counseling sessions on compassion training and integrated mindfulness-cognitive-behavioral therapy should be implemented for them. In addition, conducting similar researches in other societies according to the specific characteristics of each group can make it possible to generalize the results of this research. The present study has some limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting the results and generalizing them to other groups, such as the fact that the participants of the present study were mothers with a slow-walking child. Therefore, more research is needed to generalize the results to other populations such as healthy individuals or mothers of children with other disorders. Also, due to the restrictions caused by the corona pandemic, the loss of a number of subjects and the inconvenience of a number of others, it was not possible to check the durability of the treatment in the follow-up phase, which is recommended for future research.

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