

Clinical Trial Protocol

Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

11 Sep 2026

The Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on Dyadic Functioning, Emotion Regulation, and Symptoms of Secondary Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Spouses of Military Personnel with PTSD

Protocol summary

Study aim

Determining the effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on dyadic functioning, emotion regulation, and symptoms of secondary post-traumatic stress disorder in spouses of military personnel with PTSD.

Design

Initially, 52 participants are randomly selected and assigned to experimental and control groups through random allocation.

Settings and conduct

In the orientation session, the experimental group receives information about PTSD and the study, while the control group is provided with non-interventional content. Then, the main variables—dyadic functioning (ECS), emotion regulation (DERS), and secondary trauma (STQ)—are assessed at pretest, and PTSD diagnosis is confirmed using the PCL-5. The experimental group receives seven weekly ACT sessions (60–90 minutes each). The control group is followed without receiving intervention (but receives the treatment after the study). Assessments are conducted again at post-test and at a three-month follow-up.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The study population comprised spouses of military personnel with PTSD in Yazd (2025) referred by the Treatment Deputy of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Law Enforcement Forces. Inclusion criteria were being the spouse of a living military member with PTSD and meeting the study eligibility criteria. Exclusion criteria included hospitalization, major life events (e.g., divorce), or poor adherence to the intervention.

Intervention groups

Intervention group: Participants received 7 weekly group ACT sessions (60–90 min). Outcomes were assessed at baseline, post-intervention, and 3-month follow-up.
Control group: Participants were assigned to a wait-list

control and assessed at the same time points. ACT was offered after study completion.

Main outcome variables

Dyadic functioning – Emotion regulation – Symptoms of secondary post-traumatic stress disorder

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information

IRCT registration number: **IRCT20210708051815N3**

Registration date: **2026-07-15, 1405/04/24**

Registration timing: **retrospective**

Last update: **2026-07-15, 1405/04/24**

Update count: **0**

Registration date

2026-07-15, 1405/04/24

Registrant information

Name

Amir masoud Mirbagheri

Name of organization / entity

Country

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Recruitment status

Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date

2025-08-23, 1404/06/01

Expected recruitment end date

2025-09-23, 1404/07/01

Actual recruitment start date

2025-08-23, 1404/06/01

Actual recruitment end date

2025-10-07, 1404/07/15

Trial completion date

2026-09-22, 1405/06/31

Scientific title

The Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on Dyadic Functioning, Emotion Regulation, and Symptoms of Secondary Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Spouses of Military Personnel with PTSD

Public title

Effectiveness of ACT in Spouses of Military Personnel with PTSD

Purpose

Treatment

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria**Inclusion criteria:**

Spouses of military personnel with PTSD whose partners are still alive. The spouses must not have a history of major psychiatric disorders or hospitalization due to psychological problems. In addition, during the pre-intervention assessment, these individuals must score above the cut-off point on the research instruments, indicating the presence of the symptom. A score higher than 50 on the PCL-5 for the military individual.

Exclusion criteria:

Development of a physical or psychological illness during the study leading to hospitalization and discontinuation of the ACT treatment process. Changes in life structure, such as divorce during the study. Dropping out of therapy sessions or عدم adherence to therapeutic assignments.

Age

From **20 years** old to **65 years** old

Gender

Female

Phase

N/A

Groups that have been masked

- Participant
- Investigator

Sample size

Target sample size: **52**

Actual sample size reached: **49**

Randomization (investigator's opinion)

Randomized

Randomization description

After confirming eligibility criteria and obtaining written informed consent, participants were randomly allocated to either the intervention group (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy [ACT]) or the wait-list control group with a 1:1 allocation ratio. Randomization was performed using a computer-generated random number table. Each participant was assigned a unique identification code, and allocation to the study groups was carried out according to the predetermined random sequence. To ensure balanced group sizes, participant allocation continued until 26 individuals were assigned to

each group. The allocation list was maintained by the principal investigator, and all outcome assessments were conducted at baseline (pretest), post-intervention (posttest), and the three-month follow-up according to the assigned group.

Blinding (investigator's opinion)

Double blinded

Blinding description

Allocation and sessions were conducted under blinding by a clinical supervisor.

Placebo

Not used

Assignment

Parallel

Other design features**Secondary Ids**

empty

Ethics committees**1****Ethics committee****Name of ethics committee**

Ethics committee of baghyatallah university of medical sciences

Street address

Mollasadra st, vanak sq sheykh bahayi st,Tehran,Iran

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Approval date

2026-03-17, 1404/12/26

Ethics committee reference number

IR.BMSU.REC.1404.210

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

PTSD

ICD-10 code

F43.1

ICD-10 code description

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

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

Dyadic functioning: The World Health Organization states that the health and dynamics of couples depend on their patterns of perception, cognition, emotional system, and behavior, all of which are structural components of dyadic functioning

Timepoint

PreTest-PostTest-fallow up

Method of measurement

ECS

2**Description**

Emotion Regulation: Emotion regulation refers to any process or action through which a person influences their emotions or emotional expression.

Timepoint

PreTest-PostTest-fallow up

Method of measurement

DERS

3**Description**

Secondary Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Syndrome: Secondary trauma refers to the transmission of symptoms similar to PTSD from the affected person to someone who is in close proximity to these symptoms.

Timepoint

PreTest-PostTest-fallow up

Method of measurement

STQ

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups**1****Description**

Participants in the intervention group received group-based Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) based on the standard protocol developed by Hayes and colleagues. The intervention consisted of eight weekly sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, delivered by a clinical psychologist trained in ACT. The sessions covered the six core ACT processes, including acceptance, cognitive defusion, present-moment awareness, self-as-context, values clarification, and committed action. Homework assignments and experiential exercises were provided at the end of each session to facilitate the application of therapeutic skills in daily life. The total duration of the intervention was 8 weeks. No medications or medical devices were used during the intervention.

Category

Treatment - Other

2**Description**

Control group: Participants in the control group did not receive Acceptance and Commitment Therapy during the study period and continued to receive routine care, if needed. For ethical considerations, they were offered the ACT program after completion of the post-intervention assessments.

Category

Treatment - Other

Recruitment centers**1****Recruitment center****Name of recruitment center**

Deputy Director of Medical Affairs, Yazd Veterans Affairs Organization

Full name of responsible person

Amirmasoud Mirbagheri

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Sponsors / Funding sources**1****Sponsor****Name of organization / entity**

Bagheiat-allah University of Medical Sciences

Full name of responsible person

Dr. Abbasali Imani Fooladi

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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

Bagheiat-allah University of Medical Sciences

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**

Bagheiat-allah University of Medical Sciences

Full name of responsible person

Amirmasoud Mirbagheri

Position

Elite soldier

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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Person responsible for updating data**Contact****Name of organization / entity**

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Position

Elite soldier

Latest degree

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Other areas of specialty/work

Psychology

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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

Upon request from the corresponding author and
research supervisor, access to data is possible, subject to
confidentiality.

When the data will become available and for how long

Up to 5 years after the research is completed

To whom data/document is available

Researchers and university faculty members

Under which criteria data/document could be used

Conducting additional scientific research

From where data/document is obtainable

Responsible author

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

First, a written request via email or post to the
responsible author / review by the research team /
submission of documents

Comments

