

Rainbow Mind: Examining the effectiveness and mechanisms of change of a mindfulness and compassion based self-care intervention tailored for the LGBTQIA+ community

Submission date 04/12/2019	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	☐ Prospectively registered
Registration date 12/02/2020	Overall study status Completed	☐ Protocol
Last Edited 13/08/2025	Condition category Mental and Behavioural Disorders	☐ Statistical analysis plan
		☒ Results
		☐ Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Evidence suggests that mental health outcomes are generally worse for LGBTQIA+ people than the rest of the population. They experience higher rates of mental illness, suicide, self-harm, eating disorders and substance misuse, which may arise from events like family rejection and sexual abuse. LGBTQIA+ people have been found to be more likely to face mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. People who identify as LGBTQIA+ in the UK also report a lower quality of life than the general population.

Promising approaches to helping LGBTQIA+ individuals struggling with mixed mental health conditions are mindfulness, mindful self-compassion (MSC) and compassion-focused therapy (CFT). This study has drawn on some essential content from these methodologies into one accessible intervention that supports wellbeing and self-acceptance for LGBTQIA+ populations.

The primary research question of this study is to determine whether a tailored group-based intervention, grounded in existing mindfulness, MSC and CFT approaches, can improve wellbeing and mental health outcomes of LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Who can participate?

Self-identified LGBTQIA+ individuals aged 18 years or older.

What does the study involve?

Participants will be randomly assigned to receive the intervention or not. The intervention is a 8-week course of group sessions.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The 8-week Radical Self-care course is not group therapy but a low-intensity training programme. The possible benefits include improvement in mental health and well-being of the study participants (members of the LGBTQIA+ community), specifically issues centred around

shame, anxiety and depression. The potential risks resulting from the training sessions are deemed minimal. Participants are not being asked nor encouraged to disclose emotional, psychological, health, or education-related issues during the course. However, given the introspective nature of the course, some participants may experience psychological discomfort. Some amount of psychological discomfort is anticipated and built into the structure of the course: Skills geared toward dealing with anticipated psychological discomfort include dealing with “backdraft” (emotional, mental, or physical uneasiness that arises from engaging with the self-compassion practice) and “disillusionment” (when participants feel they are “failing” at self-compassion and how to move past that hurdle). Course skills are graded and scaled up as participants gain confidence and competency with their practice. It is possible that some participants might move beyond this anticipated psychological discomfort to experiencing emotional distress during the course. This could occur if their mental health status or support systems change during the progression of the course. All course practitioners are trained to recognise signs and signals that a participant may be suffering emotional harm, and would refer these participants to receive appropriate support.

Where is the study run from?

1. City, University of London, UK
2. Mind in the City, Hackney, and Waltham Forrest, UK
3. Mind in Salford, UK
4. LGBT Foundation, UK

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

From June 2019 to March 2020

Who is funding the study?

Government Equalities Office, UK

Who is the main contact?

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

ETH1819-1082

Study information

Scientific Title

A randomised controlled trial of an 8-week mindfulness and compassion based self-care intervention tailored for the LGBTQIA+ community

Acronym

RadSec RCT

Study objectives

1. Participants who completed the 8-wk RadSec intervention will report significant improvement in their mental health and wellbeing (GHQ-12) post-intervention and this improvement will be maintained at the 4-months follow-up
2. The effects of the intervention on participants' well-being will be mediated via the cultivation of a self-compassionate and mindful (i.e., nonjudgmental or nonreactive) attitude towards oneself and difficult internal states

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 19/06/2019, City, University of London, Psychology Research Ethics Committee (Department of Psychology, City, University of London, Northampton Square, London, EC1V 0HB, United Kingdom; +44 (0)20 7040 5060; psychology.ethics@city.ac.uk), ref: ETH1819-1082

Primary study design

Interventional

Study design

Multi-centre interventional randomized controlled trial

Study type(s)

Quality of life

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Mental health and well-being of the LGBTQIA+ community

Interventions

The target intervention condition is a novel 8-week mindfulness-based compassion intervention tailored to the unique lived-experiences and psychological struggles of LGBTQIA+ individuals. The core of the novel intervention is grounded in the existing 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Mindful Self-Compassion courses with theoretical and neuroscience underpinnings from Compassion Focused Therapy, with an emphasis on building self-compassion and mindfulness skills. The intervention is tailored to support LGBTQIA+ -specific issues including low self-esteem, internalised stigma, and shame.

The participants are randomised into two groups by the intervention coordinator following a randomisation schedule generated by the researchers using an online randomisation tool.

There are two study arms – one arm receives an 8-week Radical Self-care (RadSec) intervention; the other arm is a waitlist control which receives the RadSec intervention 8 weeks after the active group complete their intervention (i.e. 16 weeks from the start of the trial). RadSec is an 8-week mindfulness-based self-compassion intervention: The core of the novel intervention is grounded in the existing 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Mindful Self-Compassion courses, with an emphasis on building self-compassion and mindfulness skills. The intervention is tailored to support LGBT-specific issues including low self-esteem, internalised stigma, and shame.

Outcomes are measured by the General Health Questionnaire-12 at baseline, 8-weeks and 4-months post-randomisation. The effectiveness will be evaluated against a waitlist control condition.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

General well-being and mental health measured by the GHQ-12 at baseline, after 8 weeks (completion of intervention) and 4 months post randomisation

Key secondary outcome(s)

Assessed at baseline, after 8 weeks and 4 months):

1. Anxiety measured using the GAD-7
2. Depression measured using the PHQ-9
3. Shame measured using the Experience of shame scale
4. Mindfulness measured using the FFMQ-15
5. Self-compassion measured using the Self-compassion scale (SCS)
6. Rigid perfectionism and self-critical perfectionism measured using the subscales from the Big Three Perfectionism Scale
7. Rumination measured using the subscale of the RRQ
8. Concern for self, measured using a belief updating task

Process of change measures (assessed weekly over the 8 weeks):

9. Mindfulness measured using the FFMQ-15
10. Self-compassion measured using the Self-compassion scale - short form (SCS-SF)
11. Cognitive fusion measured using the cognitive fusion questionnaire (CFQ)
12. Rumination measured using the subscale of the RRQ
13. Depression, anxiety, and stress measured using the DASS-21

Completion date

11/03/2020

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Self-identified LGBTQIA+ individuals
2. Aged 18 years or older

Participant type(s)

Other

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Adult

Lower age limit

18 Years

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

118

Key exclusion criteria

1. Current suicidal intentions at the time of participant recruitment

Date of first enrolment

20/06/2019

Date of final enrolment

01/10/2019

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

Mind in the City, Hackney, and Waltham Forrest

8-10 Tudor Road

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London

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Study participating centre

Mind in Salford

The Angel Centre

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Study participating centre

LGBT Foundation

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Sponsor information

Organisation

City, University of London

ROR

<https://ror.org/04489at23>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Government

Funder Name

Government Equalities Office

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be stored in a publically available repository (OSF website, further details and links will be provided in the due course).

IPD sharing plan summary

Stored in repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Funder report results		01/09/2020	10/09/2021	No	No
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes