ISRCTN98056453 https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN98056453

REACH forgiveness: effects of a workbook intervention to promote forgiveness and psychosocial well-being

Submission date
22/08/2020

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
25/08/2020

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
01/06/2021

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[X] Prospectively registered
[_] Protocol
[X] Statistical analysis plan
[_] Results
[_] Individual participant data
[_] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Growing evidence suggests that forgiveness has mental and physical health benefits. Although the clinical utility of various forgiveness interventions has been tested empirically, a majority of those studies have been conducted in more Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic (WEIRD) countries. To extend the understanding of the potential benefits of forgiveness to less WEIRD contexts, this study examines (for the first time) the effectiveness of a two-hour do-it-yourself workbook in promoting forgiveness and well-being in a sample of South African adults.

Who can participate?
South Africans aged 18 and older who have identified a specific hurt or wrongdoing against them and for which they feel the need to forgive

What is the study about?
Participants will be randomly assigned to one of two groups, an immediate treatment group and a delayed treatment group. Both groups will complete a series of measures on three occasions. The measures include unforgiveness, decisional forgiveness, emotional forgiveness, overall well-being, peace of mind, positive affect, suffering, loneliness, sleep quality, and subjective health complaints. Both groups will self-complete a web-based 2-hour REACH forgiveness workbook. The immediate treatment group will receive the intervention after completing the measures at the start of the study, the duration of which will be 2 weeks. The delayed treatment condition will receive no intervention during those 2 weeks. Two weeks later, both groups will complete the measures a second time. The delayed treatment group will then receive the intervention for 2 weeks. After the delayed treatment group completes the 2-week intervention, both groups will complete the measures a third time (4 weeks after the study start). This timepoint will be used to assess whether the effects of the intervention were maintained.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The potential benefits to participants include an increase in forgiveness and improvements in different areas of well-being. There may be some discomfort experienced as participants recall

and work through experienced hurts, but the risks associated with such are minimal and are expected to be outweighed by the potential benefits of the intervention.

Where did the study come from?
University of Pretoria and University of the Free State (South Africa)

When does the study begin and how long is it expected to last?
July 2019 to May 2022 (updated 01/06/2021, previously: May 2021)

Who is funding the study?
Templeton World Charity Foundation (Bahamas)

Who is the main contact?
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Contact information

Type(s)
Public

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
TWCF0390

Study information

Scientific Title
Psychosocial effects of a REACH forgiveness workbook intervention in South African adults

Study objectives
1. There will be improvements in the primary outcomes of unforgiveness, decisional forgiveness, and emotional forgiveness in the immediate treatment group compared to the delayed treatment group at T2.
2. There will be improvements in the secondary outcomes of psychological well-being (i.e., peace of mind, positive affect), psychosocial distress (i.e., personal suffering, loneliness), and physical health (i.e., sleep quality, subjective health complaints) in the immediate group compared to the

delayed treatment group at T2.
3. There will be improvements in all primary and secondary outcomes in both the immediate and delayed treatment groups at T3.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
1. Approved 28/10/2019, Research Committee of the Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria (Private Bag X20, Hatfield, Pretoria, South Africa, 0028; +27 (0)12 420 2348; PSCSMPRA@up.ac.za), ref: T070/19.
2. Approved 02/12/2019, General/Human Research Ethics Committee, University of the Free State (PO Box 339, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa, 9300; +27 (0)51 401 2349; EllisPJ@ufs.ac.za), ref: UFS-HSD2019/2259/0212

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Single-center interventional randomized controlled trial

Study type(s)
Quality of life

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Forgiveness and psychosocial well-being

Interventions
A randomized controlled trial design will be employed in this study. A total of 600 participants will be recruited. Participants will be randomly assigned to either the immediate treatment group (n = 300) or the delayed treatment group (n = 300). They will be instructed to complete the two-hour REACH forgiveness workbook during a designated 2-week period and to complete the survey at three different timepoints.

The immediate treatment group will receive the intervention by self-completing a web-based version of the two-hour REACH forgiveness workbook after they have completed the battery of measures at T1. After that 2-week intervention period, both the immediate treatment and the delayed treatment groups will complete the same set of measures at T2 (2 weeks after baseline). While the immediate treatment group receives the forgiveness intervention, the delayed treatment group will receive no intervention. After the immediate treatment group completes the forgiveness intervention and both the immediate and delayed treatment groups have completed the battery of measures at T2 (2 weeks after baseline), the delayed treatment will self-complete the same web-based version of the 2-hour REACH forgiveness workbook intervention for 2 weeks. Thereafter, both the immediate treatment and the delayed treatment groups will complete the same set of measures at T3 (4 weeks after baseline).

The randomization process will take place after informed consent has been obtained and the measures are completed at baseline (T1). A third-party research assistant who will not be directly involved in data collection will use a list of computer-generated random numbers to

randomly assign participants to either the immediate treatment or delayed treatment condition. The principal investigators, outcomes assessors, and anyone involved in the analysis of data and manuscript writing will be blinded to treatment allocation

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Forgiveness assessed using the 18-item Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations inventory, the 6-item Decision to Forgive Scale, and the eight-item Emotional Forgiveness Scale at baseline (T1), 2 weeks (T2) and 4 weeks (T3)

Key secondary outcome(s)
Measured at baseline (T1), 2 weeks (T2) and 4 weeks (T3):
1. Overall well-being measured using the 10-item Flourishing Index
2. Peace of mind measured using the 7-item Peace of Mind Scale
3. Positive affect measured using the 10-item Positive Affect scale of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule
4. Sleep quality measured using the 8-item Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System Sleep Disturbance short form
5. Subjective health complaints measured using the 8-item Subjective Health Complaints Checklist
6. Personal suffering measured using the 7-item Personal Suffering Assessment
7. Loneliness measured using the 6-item De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale

Completion date
01/05/2022

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. South African residents aged 18 or older, men and women
2. People who have identified a specific hurt or wrongdoing against them and for which they feel the need to forgive

Participant type(s)
Healthy volunteer

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Lower age limit
18 Years

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. People currently experiencing an acute mental health crisis
2. People with mental, intellectual, and physical conditions/disabilities that could reasonably affect engagement with the forgiveness workbook
3. People who are not able to commit to completing the 2-hour forgiveness workbook within a designated 2-week period
4. People who do not have access to an electronic device to complete the forgiveness workbook

Date of first enrolment
01/09/2020

Date of final enrolment
01/01/2021

Locations

Countries of recruitment
South Africa

Study participating centre
University of Pretoria
Lynnwood Rd
Hatfield
Pretoria
South Africa
0002

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Pretoria

ROR
https://ror.org/00g0p6g84

Funder(s)

Funder type
Charity

Funder Name
Templeton World Charity Foundation

Alternative Name(s)
Templeton World Charity Foundation, Inc., Templeton Foundation, The John Templeton Foundation (Templeton Foundation), templetonworld, TWCF

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

Location
Bahamas

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The data-sharing plans for the current study are unknown and will be made available at a later date.

IPD sharing plan summary
Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Statistical Analysis Plan		04/10/2020	05/10/2020	No	No