




# Comparison of the Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Intensive Short-Term Dynamic Psychotherapy on Conflict Resolution Styles and Cognitive Flexibility in Incompatible Couples

Sareh. Bagheri<sup>1\*</sup>, Seyedeh Fatemeh. Hosseini Harandehi<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Master's Degree Graduate in Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychology, Ga.C., Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran

\* Corresponding author email address: bsareh64@gmail.com

### E d i t o r

Salahadin Lotfi<sup>1</sup>  
PhD in Cognitive Psychology & Neuroscience, UWM & Rogers Behavioral Health Verified, Lecturer at University of Wisconsin slotfi@uwm.edu

### R e v i e w e r s

**Reviewer 1:** Abolghasem Khoshkanesh<sup>1</sup>  
Assistant Professor, Counseling Department, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran.  
Email: akhoshkonesh@sbu.ac.ir  
**Reviewer 2:** Seyed Ali Darbani<sup>1</sup>  
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Counseling, South Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.  
Email: Ali.darbani@iau.ac.ir

## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

This paragraph would benefit from including a global or regional prevalence rate of marital conflict or cognitive inflexibility to strengthen the need for the study.

Clarify whether inclusion was based solely on marital conflict scores or also therapist referral/diagnosis. Include how the "random assignment" was carried out (block randomization?).

The detail on the Marital Conflict Questionnaire is appreciated, but there is repetition regarding item grouping and scoring. Consider streamlining this for clarity.

In the CBT intervention section, sessions 1–8 are well described, but it would be helpful to include whether any homework assignments were provided, which is common in CBT protocols.

You mention 10 sessions for ISTDP and 8 for CBT. This asymmetry may influence outcomes. Please justify why ISTDP received more sessions and whether this was controlled in the analysis.

Add specific p-values for the Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's tests to demonstrate statistical rigor.

You could improve this comparison by briefly offering a clinical interpretation of the effect sizes—what does a 0.71 vs. 0.64 effect size mean in terms of practical outcomes for therapists?

The paragraph comparing ISTDP and CBT mechanisms is strong. Consider adding a brief mention of neuropsychological or neurobiological correlates of flexibility and emotional regulation to anchor the clinical impact.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

This paragraph outlines ISTDP well but could be improved by briefly explaining what distinguishes “short-term” from traditional psychodynamic approaches (e.g., <20 sessions, focused confrontation, etc.).

The introduction is heavily weighted with CBT and ISTDP citations from 2022–2025. Consider including at least one foundational or meta-analytic reference (e.g., APA guidelines or Cochrane reviews) to anchor the empirical context.

This is a strong rationale but could be bolstered by explicitly stating the novelty: e.g., “To our knowledge, no prior study has compared CBT and ISTDP on both cognitive flexibility and conflict resolution using a randomized design.”

Although the use of Tukey’s test is standard, given the small sample sizes (13–14 per group), consider justifying why this test was preferred over Bonferroni or Games-Howell, which are more robust under heteroscedasticity.

In Table 1, the labels “Pretest ( $M \pm SD$ )” and “Posttest ( $M \pm SD$ )” could be misinterpreted as totals instead of means per group. Consider adding a column indicating “ $N = 14$ ” beside each condition for clarity.

In the paragraph following Table 5, the phrase “no significant difference was observed in the control group ( $p = 0.443$ )” is inconsistent with the table, which reports “ $p = 0.532$ .” Please correct this discrepancy.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.