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Original Article (Quantitative)

# Comparing the effectiveness of solution-focused child skills training and acceptance and commitment-based play therapy on the self-esteem of anxious children

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**Abstract**

Objective: This study aimed to compare the effectiveness of Solution-Focused Kids' Skills Training and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)-Based Play Therapy in improving the self-esteem of anxious children. Methods: This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest–posttest, control group, and a three-month follow-up. The statistical population consisted of all anxious children aged 9–12 years attending schools in District 5 of Tehran, Iran, during the 2024–2025 academic year. A total of 60 students were selected through purposive sampling based on the study inclusion and exclusion criteria and were then randomly assigned to three equal groups using simple random allocation. Data were collected using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (1967). The experimental groups received either the Solution-Focused Kids' Skills Training protocol or the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-Based Play Therapy protocol, each delivered in eight 60-minute sessions. The data were analyzed using repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) with SPSS version 26. Results: The findings revealed a significant difference in self-esteem between anxious children who received Solution-Focused Kids' Skills Training and those who received Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-Based Play Therapy ($P < 0.05$). Based on the mean scores and effect sizes, Solution-Focused Kids' Skills Training produced greater improvements in the self-esteem of anxious children than ACT-Based Play Therapy. Moreover, no significant differences were found between the posttest and the three-month follow-up scores for either intervention, indicating that the treatment effects were maintained over time. Conclusion: The findings suggest that Solution-Focused Kids' Skills Training is more effective than Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-Based Play Therapy in enhancing the self-esteem of anxious children. Therefore, this intervention may be considered an effective evidence-based approach for promoting self-esteem among children with anxiety.

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