

ANSK CENTER FOR MINDFULNESS

CULTIVATION TRAINING PROGRAM FOR CAREGIVERS OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN DENMARK A RANDOMIZED CLINICAL TRIAL

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Original Investigation | Psychiatry

Effect of a Compassion Cultivation Training Program for Caregivers of People With Mental Illness in Denmark A Randomized Clinical Trial

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Abstract

IMPORTANCE Caregivers of people with mental illness are at increased risk of developing depression, anxiety, and stress.

OBJECTIVE To investigate the effect of a compassion cultivation training (CCT) program on decreasing caregiver psychological distress.

Key Points

Question Is a compassion cultivation training (CCT) intervention effective in decreasing psychological distress in informal caregivers of people with mental illness?

Findings In this randomized clinical trial

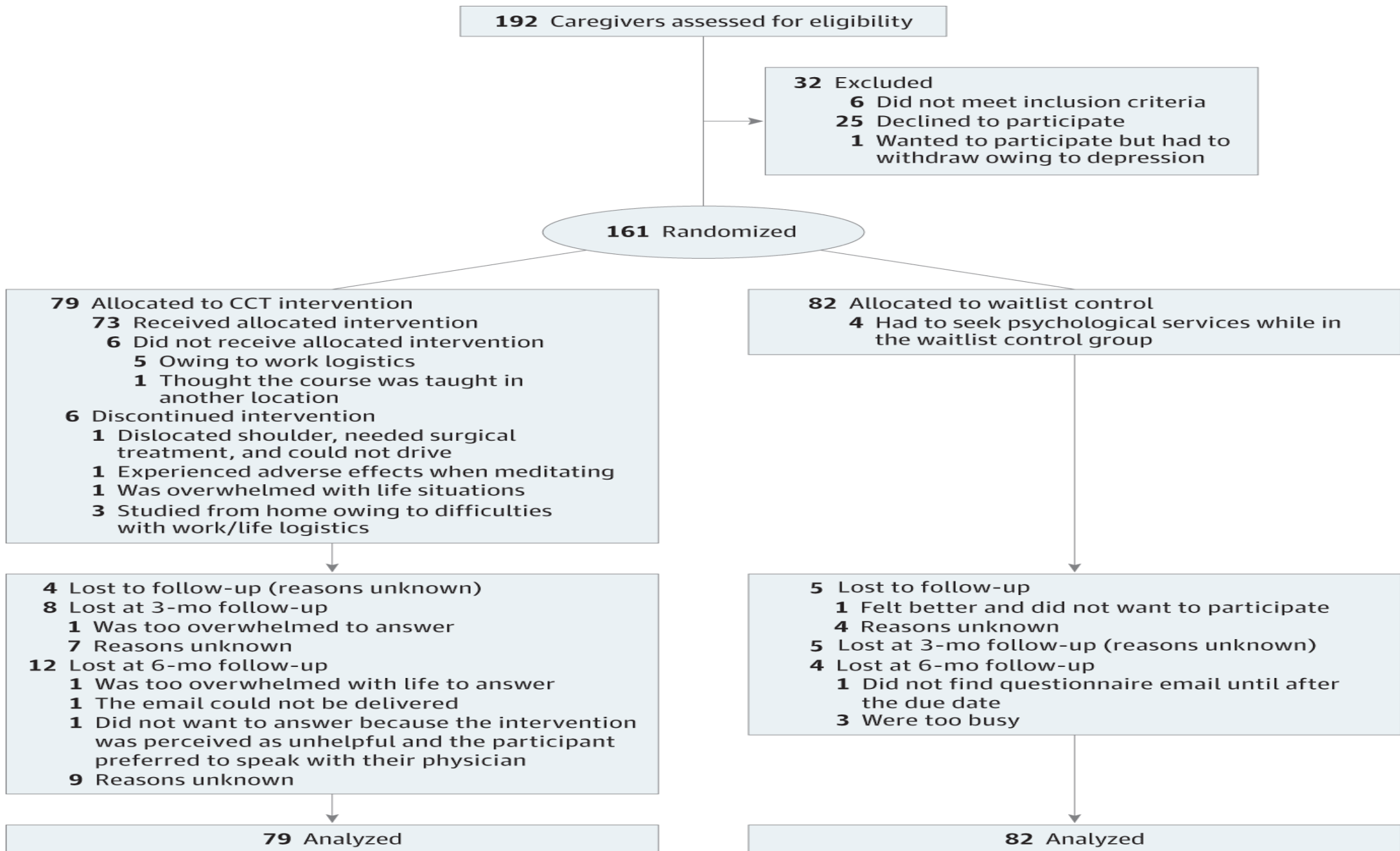


Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Caregivers at Baseline

Characteristic	No. (%)		
	Intervention group (n = 79)	Control group (n = 82)	Total (n = 161)
Sex			
Men	11 (14.1)	8 (9.7)	19 (11.8)
Women	68 (85.9)	74 (90.2)	142 (88.2)
Age, mean (SD), y	55.9 (13.3)	49.5 (10.8)	52.6 (12.5)
Educational level			
No high school	1 (1.3)	1 (1.2)	2 (1.2)
High school	4 (5.1)	2 (2.4)	6 (3.7)
Trade school	5 (6.3)	10 (12.2)	15 (9.2)
Short continuing education	8 (10.1)	3 (3.7)	11 (6.8)
Medium continuing education	43 (54.4)	25 (30.5)	68 (42.0)
Long continuing education	17 (21.5)	38 (46.3)	55 (34.0)
PhD	0	3 (3.7)	3 (1.9)
Other	1 (1.3)	0	1 (0.6)
Caretaking duration, y			
0-5	22 (28.2)	22 (27.1)	45 (28.1)
5-10	23 (29.5)	20 (24.7)	43 (26.9)
10-15	5 (6.5)	16 (19.8)	21 (13.1)
15-20	9 (11.5)	5 (6.2)	14 (8.8)
>20	19 (24.4)	18 (22.2)	37 (23.1)
Psychiatric disorder of person being cared for ^a			
Anxiety	18 (22.2)	35 (42.7)	53 (32.7)
ADHD	10 (12.7)	14 (17.1)	24 (14.8)
Autism	17 (21.5)	14 (17.1)	32 (19.8)
Bipolar disorder	9 (11.4)	12 (14.6)	21 (13.0)
OCD	6 (7.6)	12 (14.6)	18 (11.1)
Depression	19 (24.1)	21 (25.6)	40 (24.7)
Addiction	10 (12.7)	8 (9.8)	18 (11.1)
Personality disorder	8 (10.1)	13 (15.9)	21 (13.0)
PTSD	7 (8.7)	7 (8.5)	14 (8.6)
Schizophrenia	21 (26.6)	13 (15.9)	34 (21.0)
Eating disorder	7 (8.9)	3 (3.7)	10 (6.2)
Stress	6 (7.6)	9 (11.0)	16 (9.9)
Acquired brain injury	6 (7.6)	6 (7.3)	12 (7.4)
Other ^b	7 (8.7)	10 (12.2)	17 (10.5)

Abbreviations: ADHD, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder; OCD, obsessive compulsive disorder; PTSD, posttraumatic stress disorder.

^a Caregivers often had loved ones with comorbid disorders; therefore, the percentages do not total 100.

^b Includes disruptive behavior, bodily distress syndrome, intellectual disability, psychogenic nonepileptic seizures, Parkinson disease, schizotypal disorder, attachment disorder, Tourette syndrome, dementia.

Table 2. Effect of CCT on the Primary Outcome of Depression, Stress, and Anxiety in Informal Caregivers of People With Mental Illness at Postintervention and 3- and 6-Month Follow-up

Measure	CCT Intervention			Control			Between-group difference, mean (95% CI) ^a	P value	Cohen d
	Caregivers, No.	Score, mean (SD)	Within-group change from baseline, mean (95% CI) ^a	Caregivers, No.	Score, mean (SD)	Within-group change from baseline, mean (95% CI) ^a			
Depression ^b									
Baseline	76	10.89 (8.66)	NA	79	10.80 (8.38)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Postintervention	68	7.84 (8.30)	-3.60 (-5.47 to -1.73)	76	11.28 (9.53)	0.56 (-1.22 to 2.34)	-4.16 (-6.75 to -1.58)	.002	0.66
3 mo	63	7.02 (8.14)	-3.68 (-5.60 to -1.76)	76	11.09 (10.93)	0.11 (-1.67 to 1.88)	-3.78 (-6.40 to -1.17)	.005	0.56
6 mo	54	6.61 (8.27)	-3.93 (-5.96 to -1.90)	72	11.40 (10.67)	0.31 (-1.50 to 2.12)	-4.24 (-6.97 to -1.52)	.002	0.45
Anxiety ^b									
Baseline	74	6.89 (6.48)	NA	82	6.68 (5.33)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Postintervention	67	5.10 (5.33)	-2.03 (-3.32 to -0.75)	73	6.73 (7.00)	0.21 (-0.99 to 1.40)	-2.24 (-3.99 to -0.48)	.01	0.51
3 mo	62	4.95 (5.51)	-2.01 (-3.33 to -0.69)	76	7.05 (6.95)	0.49 (-0.70 to 1.67)	-2.50 (-4.27 to -0.73)	.006	0.56
6 mo	53	5.55 (5.94)	-1.18 (-2.57 to 0.21)	72	7.43 (7.85)	0.94 (-0.26 to 2.15)	-2.12 (-3.96 to -0.29)	.02	0.30
Stress ^b									
Baseline	77	14.96 (7.90)	NA	78	15.77 (7.40)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Postintervention	65	10.65 (7.11)	-4.15 (-6.00 to -2.30)	77	15.81 (8.81)	0.05 (-1.67 to 1.77)	-4.20 (-6.73 to -1.67)	.001	0.74
3 mo	63	10.75 (8.35)	-3.90 (-5.78 to -2.03)	76	15.68 (10.36)	-0.13 (-1.87 to 1.60)	-3.76 (-6.32 to -1.21)	.004	0.56
6 mo	54	10.39 (7.74)	-4.17 (-6.15 to -2.19)	71	15.38 (10.03)	-0.38 (-2.15 to 1.39)	-3.79 (-6.44 to -1.13)	.005	0.43

Abbreviations: CCT, compassion cultivation training; NA, not applicable.

^a Adjusted for sex, age, educational level, years as informal caretaker, and diagnosis of schizophrenia or anxiety for patient.

^b Measured using the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale. Each subscale has a range of 0 to 14, with higher scores indicating more psychological distress.

SECONDARY OUTCOME AT 6 MONTH FOLLOW-UP—

↓ Perceived stress: 95% CI: -1.99 (-4.01 - .03), $p=0.054$, $d=0.29$

↑ Resilience: 95% CI: .32 (.11 - .53) , $p=0.002$, $d=0.36$

↑ WHO-5 well-being: 95% CI: 7.53 (1.00 - 14.05), $p=0.024$, $d=0.35$

↑ Emotion regulation: Cognitive reappraisal: 95% CI: 2.02 (.01 - 4.04), $p=0.049$, $d=0.29$

↓ Emotion regulation: Emotion Suppression: 95% CI: -1.65 (-3.13 - -.17),

 $p=0.029$, $d=0.35$
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↑ Self-compassion: 95% CI: 4.28 (2.05 - 6.50),
p=0.000, $d=0.51$

↑ Mindfulness: 95% CI: 5.18 (3.18 - 7.18),
p=0.000, $d=0.69$

→ Compassion for other: 95% CI: -.05 (-.24 - .13),
p=0.568, $d=0.09$

LIMITATIONS

No active control group

Nonblinding of the intervention allocation

Self-reported outcome measures, makes it possible that information bias was present

PERSPECTIVES

According to WHO, depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and perceived stress is an independent risk factor for increased illness and mortality.

Policy makers and health care professionals have few options in offering caregiver's evidence-based interventions that help improve their mental health.

Compassion is a trainable skill that promotes mental health

CCT can be taught in a group format reducing societal cost.



Q & A