

“#KindGirlsInACTion”:

A School-based Group Programme for Adolescents



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INTRODUCTION

#KindGirlsInACTion is a school-based quality of life promotion and eating disorders prevention Programme for adolescent girls, which includes Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT) components. ACT (Livheim et al., 2015) and CFT (Wellford & Langmead, 2015) have been separately applied in adolescents, in the form of school-based interventions, with success. Moreover, the combination of both therapies has been proved as successful in interventions with different aims, in the adult population. (e.g., Palmeira, Pinto-Gouveia, & Cunha, 2017).

AIMS

This programme aims at promoting girls' **compassion, acceptance and values-based committed action**, with intended impact in the **exhibition of self-care behaviors, positive body image attitudes and affiliative peer relationships** and, consequently, in **body and eating-related behaviors and overall levels of health-related quality of life**.

PROCEDURE

#KindGirlsInACTion is a **school-based group programme** designed for **girls aged between 12 and 18**, attending middle or secondary schools. It comprises **9 weekly sessions of 45 minutes each**. Groups will have two therapists with experience in acceptance, mindfulness and compassion-based interventions. Psychological processes (compassion, acceptance, defusion, mindful awareness and committed action) will be tested as **mediators** of change of outcome variables.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS OF THE #KindGirlsInACTion

Session I - Introduction to the programme „Kind girls in ACTion”	Introduction and orientation to the programme: participants' self-presentation: introduction to mindfulness.
Session II - Promotion of group union „There's more that brings us together than we think”	Promotion of group union (exercise of common humanity); topic debate: being a female adolescent.
Session III - Emotion regulation systems „How does our mind work?”	Human mind functioning in an evolutionary perspective: Threat/protection, drive/excitement and soothing/affiliation emotion regulation systems.
Session IV - Compassion: An introduction „Remember to be kind”	Definition of the concept: interplay between compassion and emotion regulation systems.
Session V - Self-compassion and compassion for others „Remember to be kind to yourself and others”	Definition of the concepts; benefits of practicing compassion; exercises of compassion (e.g., loving-kindness meditation).
Session VI - Defining values and committed actions „It's not about the destination; it's about the journey”	Introduction to the concept of committed actions; presentation of metaphors.
Session VII - Cognitive Fusion vs Defusion „Our chatty mind”	Introduction to the concepts; presentation of metaphors.
Session VIII - Control vs Acceptance „Control is a trap”	Introduction to the concepts; presentation of metaphors.
Session IX - Life values and committed actions „Remember to be kind and live by your values”	Further development of engaged living: identification of obstacles to the practice of mindfulness, to compassion and committed action, and strategies to overcome them; end of programme discussion.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND MEASUREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

It is expected that the intervention will produce **improvements on acceptance, values-driven behaviors, and mindfulness skills**, which are hypothesized to impact positively in **body image attitudes, self-care behaviors, affiliative skills, and in eating behaviors and quality of life levels**.

We believe that the innovative combination of ACT and CFT, in a programme which is mostly experiential, will contribute for the **prevention of body and eating-related psychopathology** and for the **promotion of female adolescents' well-being**.

References

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