

Healing Hearts: Evaluating the Awareness, Courage and Love (ACL) Model of Functional Analytic Psychotherapy Through a Cultural Lens



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INTRO

- With social isolation and its negative effects continuing to grow, it's more important than ever to investigate how social connection and authenticity might serve as protective buffers. While active use of social media can foster online connection, many individuals still experience a deep sense of loneliness.
- A potential solution is the Awareness, Courage, and Love (ACL) model, a peer-led intervention promoting vulnerable sharing, compassionate responsiveness, and respect for agency. Additionally, as cultural values such as individualism or collectivism influence connection styles, it's important to examine how the impact of ACL interventions may differ across cultures.

METHODS

- We conducted single session ACL interventions using two distinct response approaches. One emphasized compassionate responsiveness and respect for agency, while the other focused on offering advice.
- Thirty-one participants identifying as individualistic or collectivistic engaged in intervention (n=15) and control (n=16) conditions.
- Before and after sessions, all participants completed multiple measures assessing perceived relational closeness, social connection, and loneliness.

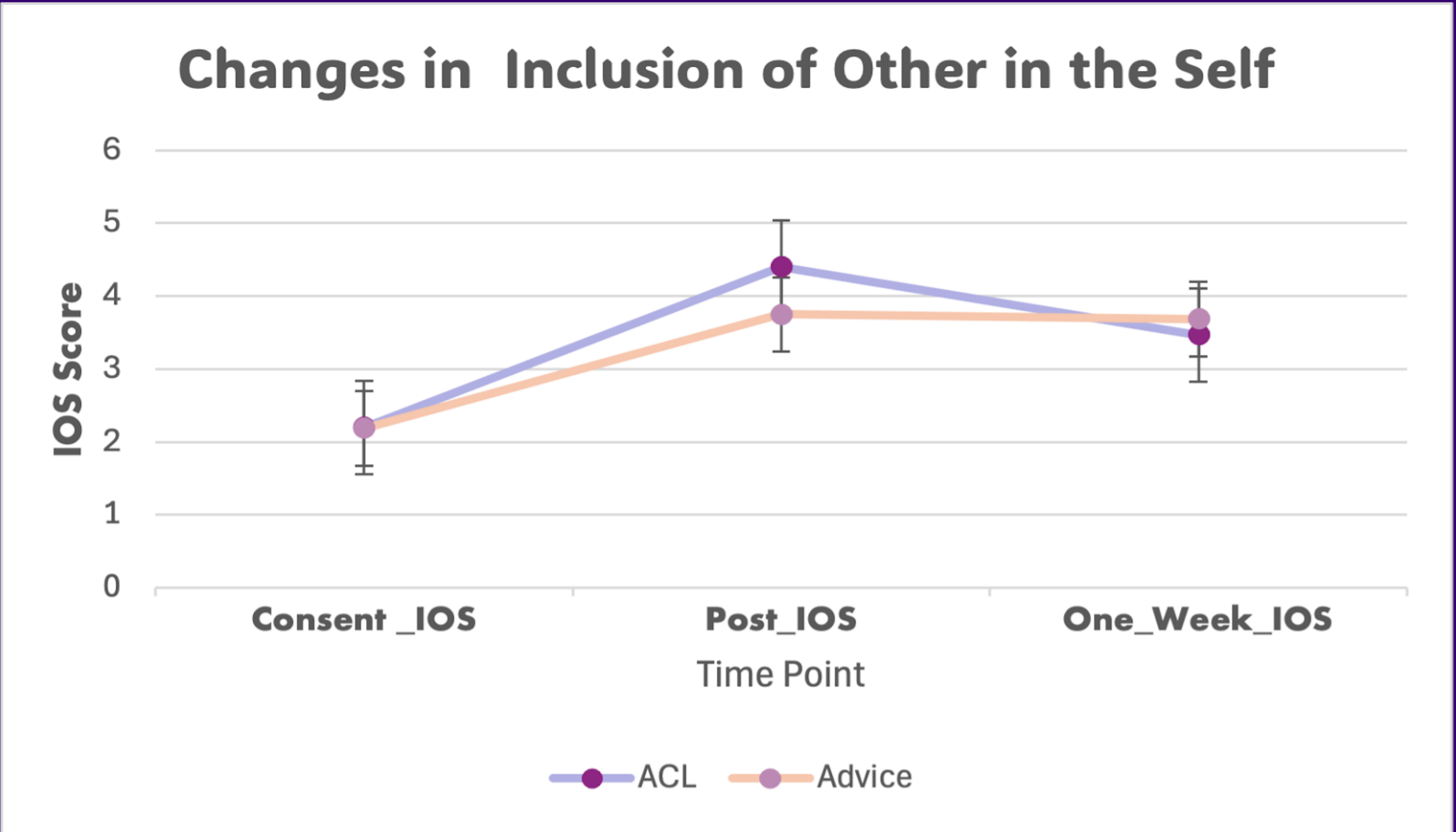
RESULTS

- Participants in both conditions responded positively to the sessions. Across both conditions participants show a significant increase in relational closeness immediately after the intervention. While there was a numerically greater increase in the ACL condition compared to the advice condition, the difference was not statistically significant.
- Across all conditions there were no statistically significant differences for social connection or loneliness.

DISCUSSION

- Participants in both the ACL and Advice conditions experienced significant improvements in relational closeness, and a modest improvement in social connectedness across both cultures suggesting ACL's impact may be consistent across cultures.
- While there was no statistically significant difference across conditions for loneliness, the collectivistic cultures with advice condition trended toward reduced loneliness. Future investigations adapting the ACL model's alignment across cultures may increase its impact.
- Findings suggest that an ACL intervention appears to have potential to improve relational closeness across cultures. This model provides an accessible resource outside of traditional psychotherapy.

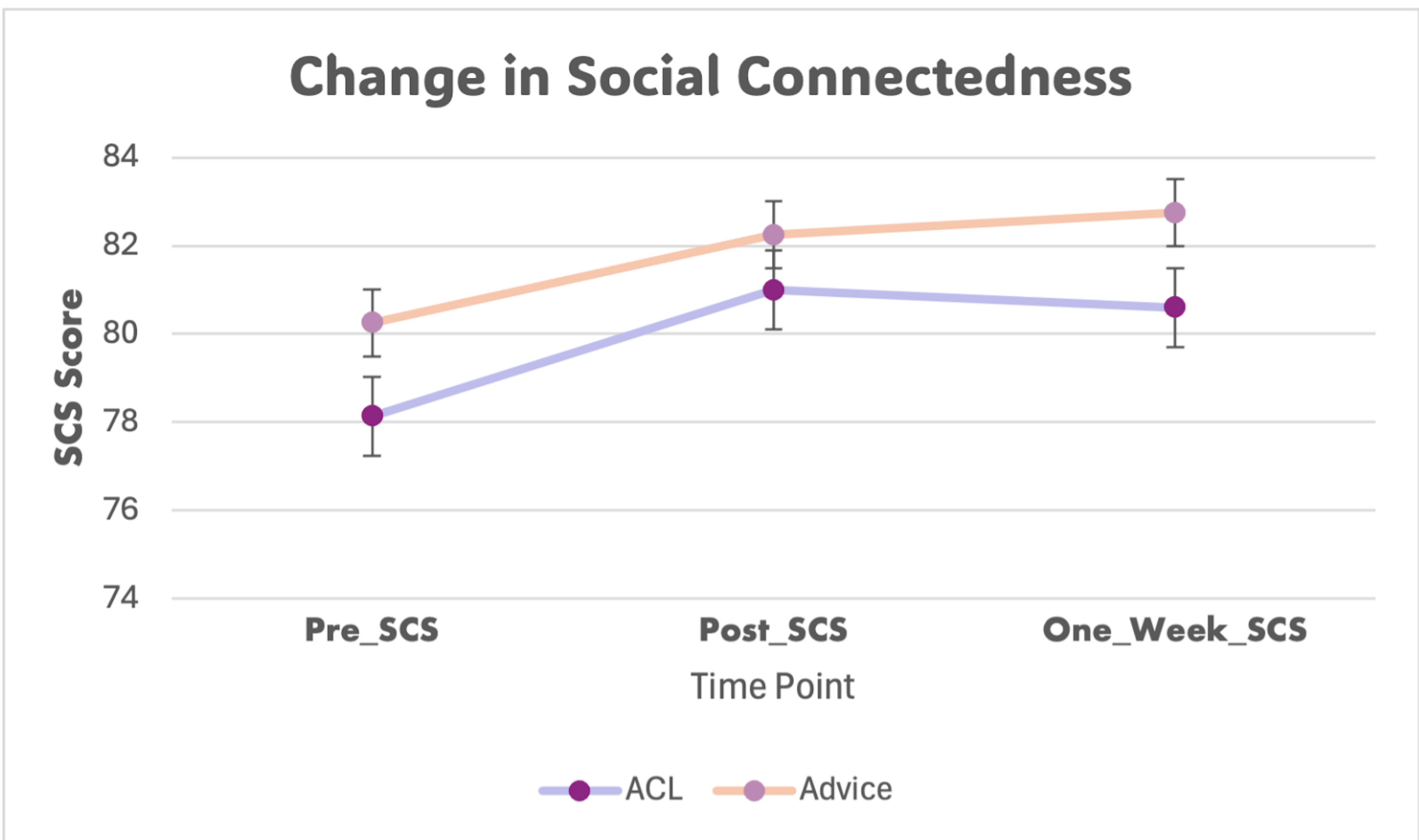
Relational closeness significantly improved
when engaging in conversations utilizing the
ACL model, compared to those centered
around advice giving. There was **no**
significant difference when comparing
conversations across **individualistic and**



Vulnerability Prompts

- What would you do if you knew you could not fail?
- Tell me about an ongoing struggle you've been having that's difficult to admit.
- What is something that feels vulnerable to talk about?

Cultures Condition	Individualism	Collectivism	Total
ACL	7	8	15
Advice	7	9	16
Total	14	17	31



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