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Can Self-Repair Training Help Women with Symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder? A Quasi-Experimental Study

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the second paragraph of the introduction, the statement “Emotion dysregulation in BPD manifests as heightened emotional sensitivity...” is well-supported, yet the authors do not sufficiently operationalize how “self-regulation” differs from “emotion regulation” in their model. A clearer conceptual distinction is required, particularly because self-regulation is treated as an outcome variable; otherwise, there is a risk of construct overlap and tautological interpretation of results.

In the third paragraph, the authors state that “Individuals with BPD tend to rely more heavily on immature and neurotic defense styles.” While this is empirically supported, the manuscript does not justify why only neurotic defenses (and not immature or mature defenses) were selected as the dependent variable. The authors should provide a rationale for this selective focus and discuss its implications for interpretability and completeness of psychological assessment.

In the same section, the inclusion criterion “absence of chronic psychological disorders” is problematic given that BPD itself is a chronic condition. The authors should clarify whether this refers to comorbid disorders and specify which conditions were excluded.

In the “Measures” section, the authors report reversing the scoring of the self-regulation questionnaire. However, they do not report whether psychometric properties (e.g., reliability, factor structure) were reassessed after reversal. This omission raises concerns about measurement validity.

In the description of the defense mechanisms questionnaire, the reported Cronbach’s alpha of 0.50 in the Iranian sample is relatively low. The authors should critically discuss the implications of this low reliability for the robustness of their findings.

In the “Intervention” section, the authors state that “the self-repair training package was developed for the first time.” While innovative, this raises concerns about construct validity. The authors should provide more detailed documentation of the development process, including coding procedures, theme extraction, and inter-rater reliability metrics beyond CVR.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the fourth paragraph, the sentence “Another key dimension of BPD pathology is disturbance in identity and self-concept” introduces an important construct; however, this construct is not directly measured in the study. The authors should either justify its inclusion as a theoretical mediator or remove/reduce emphasis to maintain alignment between theoretical framework and measured variables.

In the paragraph reviewing existing treatments (e.g., DBT, MBT), the authors mention “limitations remain, including accessibility, cost, treatment duration...” but do not provide empirical quantification or comparative data. This weakens the argument for the necessity of the proposed intervention. Including specific effect sizes or dropout rates from prior studies would significantly strengthen this justification.

In the paragraph introducing self-repair, the definition “self-repair refers to the individual’s capacity to restore psychological equilibrium...” is conceptually broad. The authors should operationalize self-repair into measurable components and explicitly map these components onto the intervention sessions to avoid the impression of conceptual vagueness.

In the final paragraph of the introduction, the authors state “there remains a gap in the literature regarding structured interventions specifically designed to enhance self-repair capacities.” This claim requires stronger substantiation through a more systematic review or citation of failed or insufficient prior interventions, rather than a general assertion.

In the “Study design and Participant” section, the sentence “40 participants... were purposively selected... and then randomly assigned” reflects a mixed sampling strategy. The authors should clarify the methodological implications of combining purposive sampling with random assignment, particularly regarding internal vs. external validity.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.