

Comparing Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Social Anxiety Disorder: A Randomized Controlled Trial. Kristina Morén and Camilla Wiwe. In C.E. Drake (Chair), *ACT, Mindfulness and Social Anxiety Disorder*. Symposium presented at The Second World Conference on ACT, RFT, and Contextual Behavioural Science, London, UK, July 27, 2006

Abstract. Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) is the third largest mental health problem in the world today and the largest among the anxiety disorders. There are currently several empirically validated treatments for SAD available but significant gaps remain in the ability to achieve full remission in patients. Research on new treatments therefore seems imperative. The current study, a randomized controlled trial, compared the efficacy of a short-term intervention of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for SAD. The study included 33 individuals diagnosed with SAD. Participants received four weekly sessions each, including two individual, and two group sessions. The study included pre-, post-, and two month follow-up measurements. The results showed that participants in both groups had improved over time, with significant main effects for the degree of experiential avoidance (AAQ-2), the degree of satisfaction with life (SWLS), the degree of social interaction anxiety (SIAS), the degree of avoidance and fusion (AFQ) and the degree of valued living and committed action in the area of “work and education” (Bull’s Eye, dartboards 2 & 5). A significant main effect on trend level for the degree of fear and scrutiny by others (SPS) was also found. No significant interaction effects were found. Effect sizes for the main effects were small to medium, normal and acceptable levels in comparable clinical research. Based on this outcome it could be argued that the two treatments possess an equal efficacy for SAD. A future focus may therefore be to further examine if there are differences in terms of personality traits of patients that might merit choosing either treatment over the other and also to investigate whether the two treatments work through the same, or different mechanisms of action.