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**Evaluating the Effects of Self-Practice/Self-Reflection on Cognitive Flexibility,  
Empathy, Insight, Self-Compassion, Self-Monitoring, and Stress in Postgraduate  
Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Trainees**

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## **Abstract**

There is considerable evidence to suggest that cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) training programs can effectively enhance therapists' CBT knowledge and skills. In response, research is now beginning to establish which specific training strategies are most effective in developing which CBT skills and competencies. Self-practice/self-reflection (SP/SR) is an experiential training strategy used to enhance CBT training and the ongoing professional development of CBT practitioners. Self-practice/self-reflection provides therapists with a structured experience of using CBT on themselves (self-practice) and reflecting on that experience (self-reflection). In order to build on previous SP/SR research, the aim of the current study was to explore the effects of SP/SR on six specific dimensions of CBT therapist competence: cognitive flexibility, empathy, insight, self-compassion, self-monitoring, and stress, among postgraduate CBT trainees. Seven students completing a SP/SR program as part of the Postgraduate Diploma in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy at Massey University were recruited to participate in the study. Quantitative data using six self-report measures of therapist competence was collected at five critical time points pertaining to the participants' SP/SR program: baseline, pre-intervention, midpoint, post-intervention, and follow-up. Qualitative data was collected from participants' written reflections. A mixed method design using descriptive quantitative and qualitative thematic analysis provided valuable quantitative (and some qualitative) support for the use of SP/SR as a CBT training and development strategy, particularly when targeting these six dimensions of CBT therapist competence.

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