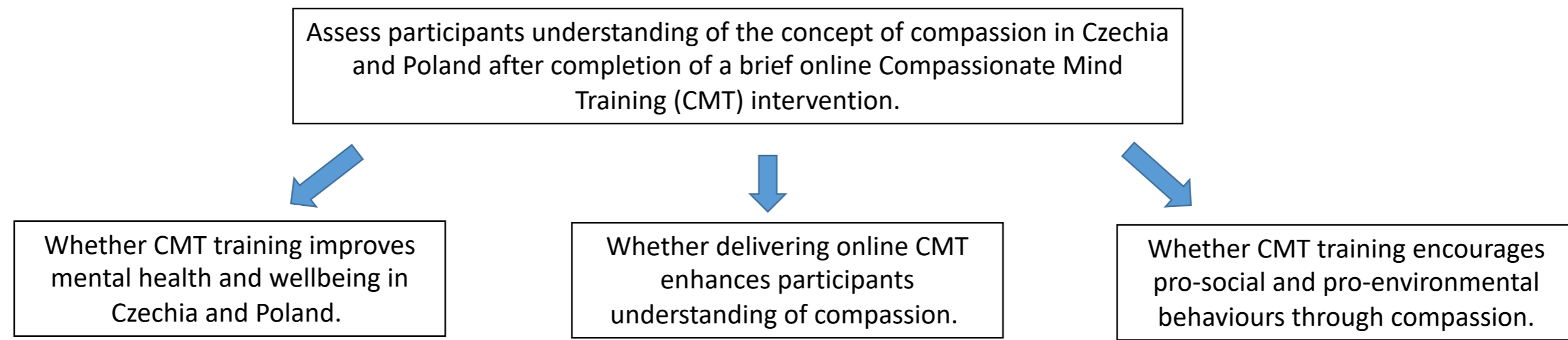




AIM & OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY



UNDERSTANDING COMPASSION

- Compassion is defined as "a sensitivity to suffering in self and others with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it" (Gilbert, 2015).
- Compassion was found to improve life satisfaction and reduces depression (Philips, 2018), improve quality of life and emotional well-being (Kashdan et al., 2006) and improve mental health (Tiwari et al., 2020).



- Compassion is further associated with prosocial behaviour (Feldman Hall et al., 2015), pro-environmental attitudes and nature connection (McEwan et al., 2021).
- Therefore, it was suggested that promoting compassion could positively affect individuals' attitudes towards themselves, other species and the environment, and pro-social behaviour.



RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative design

Semi-structured interviews before and after people engage in online Compassionate Mind Training (CMT).



Each interview was transcribed and subsequently analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith, 1996) approach that aims to gain an in-depth insight into participants' unique experiences and individual sense-making of these experiences (Smith, 2004).

The interviews asked participants about their, personal understanding, definitions, expectations and experiences of compassion and how this alters (if at all), after completing an online CMT intervention.

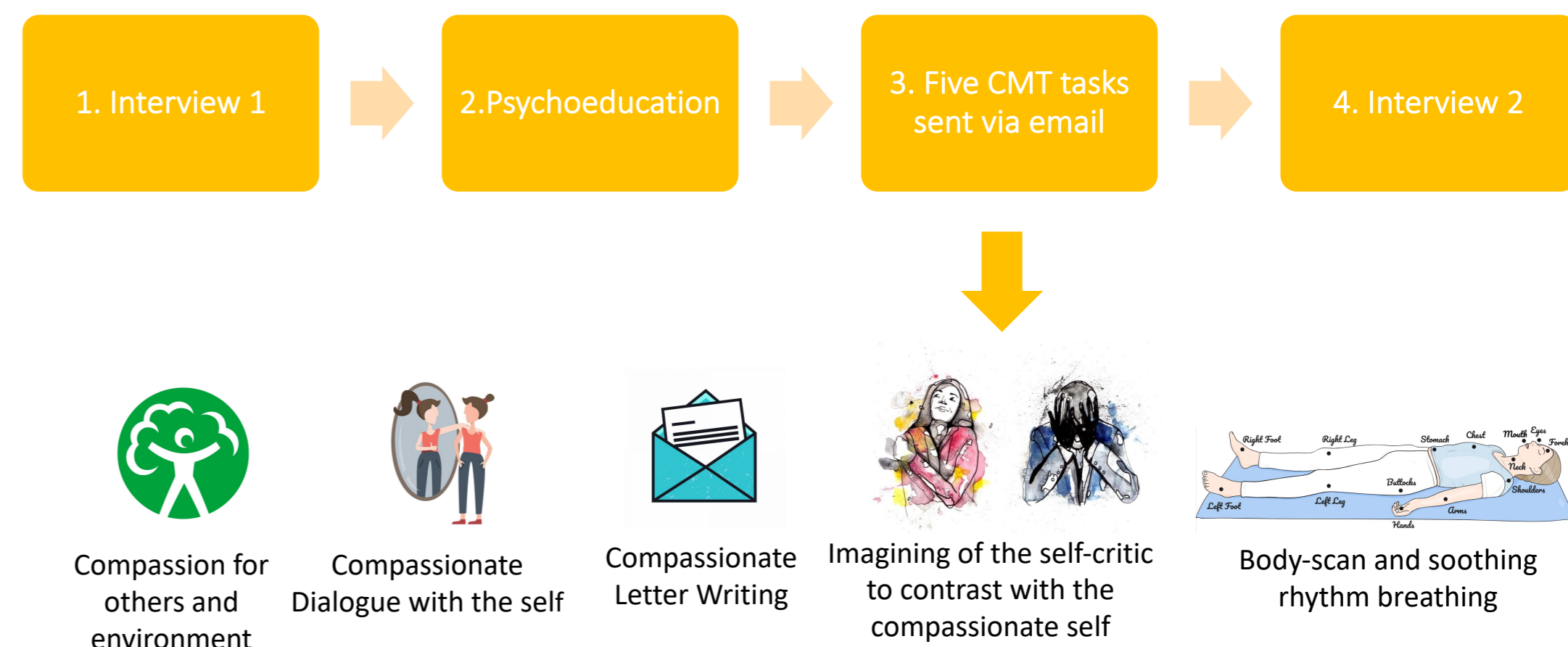


KEY FINDINGS

- Majority of participants demonstrated a positive understanding of compassion.
- The use of compassion in participants experiences was described as having self soothing effects, improving their mood and life satisfaction as well as reduce stress.
- Compassion was also described as an important source of finding peace in uncomfortable or confrontational social situations.
 - It led to more compassionate attitudes towards others (e.g., colleagues at work) and the desire to understand the circumstances of others before judging their behaviour.
- Majority of participants described feeling more motivated to think about environmental impacts of their actions and engage in pro-social behaviours.
 - One participant, however, stated that nature connection is not natural to their personality and felt slightly cringy.
- The last exercise that involved imagining self-critic in contrast to compassionate self was too difficult to some participants.
- There was a misconception of empathy and compassion even after engaging in the intervention.
 - Participants could not distinguish compassion and empathy.



STUDY PROCESS



IMPLICATIONS

- Missconception between compassion and empathy needs a longer intervention (Gilbert, 2010) as the usual therapy lasts between 12-24 weeks (i.e., 2hrs weekly) and the present intervention lasted 1 week. The distinction between the two concepts could also be empathised in the psychoeducation.
- Participants also stated that one week of practicing compassion is not enough to train themselves to become more compassionate.
- Larger population sample and questionnaires focused on impact of compassion on wellbeing, pro-social & pro-environmental behaviour could be beneficial to implement in Poland and Czechia, examining the statistical significance of the effects CMT has on people in these countries.
- Exercise 5 – Imagining of the self-critic to contrast with the compassionate self - could be replaced, or the instructions should include more guidance as they struggled to complete this task or they did not do it.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- The study demonstrated that CMT was highly accepted by the Czech and Polish population sample.
- It also revealed the understanding of compassion among the public, showing that people hold onto a common misconception of the concept prior to the intervention and psychoeducation, as well as cannot distinguish between empathy and compassion after the intervention.
- CMT had a positive impact on pro-social behaviour, wellbeing, and partially pro-environmental behaviour.
- This study assisted in the pursuit of making CMT available in other countries and making it accessible to a wider range of individuals from which they can benefit greatly in their day to day lives.



References

