Reviewer's report

**Title:** Psychological Advocacy Towards Healing (PATH): randomised controlled trial to determine the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a psychological intervention delivered by domestic violence advocates

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 21 April 2013

**Reviewer:** Judith McFarlane

**Reviewer's report:**

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

Regarding the first question: The study design cannot adequate test the hypotheses stated due to the lack of an attention control group. Efficacious interventions are required for effectiveness research trials. The present study does not propose to test an efficacious intervention.

Efficacy is how well a treatment works in a clinical trial and effectiveness indicates how well the treatment works in practice. Efficacy research always precedes effectiveness research. Implementing an intervention in practice, as the researchers propose, without an evidence-based efficacious intervention is never justified and maybe a waste of resources and participants time, and potentially have a negative effect size. Without an attention control group with participants who receive the exact same amount of time and attention given to the intervention group, the researchers can offer no evidence of efficacy of the 8 proposed sessions and therefore have no evidence to move to an effectiveness trial. An attention control group can be added to the present proposed design and offer the efficacy data needed to move forward to an effectiveness trial in the future.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No competing interests