

## Changes in General Distress

### During a Psychological Treatment: The Role of Psychological flexibility.

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The change in psychological flexibility is considered to be the key mechanism of change within the ACT theoretical framework. It implies a full contact with the present moment as a conscious human being, as well as changing or persisting in behavior in the service of chosen values based on what the situation affords (Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda, & Lillis, 2006).

**Our initial study** included 117 clients participating in free-of-charge psychological treatment in Psychological Counseling Center in Novi Sad. 74.8% of the participants were female and 25.2% male, ranging from 18 to 63 years of age (mode = 25). The treatment consisted of 10 sessions. It was conducted by 19 psychological counselors originating from REBT and Transactional analysis theoretical orientation, without any experience or education in ACT.

**The main goal** of this evolving longitudinal research was to evaluate the potential of this construct in predicting the reduction of general distress during the ongoing psychotherapy treatment.

#### Instruments:

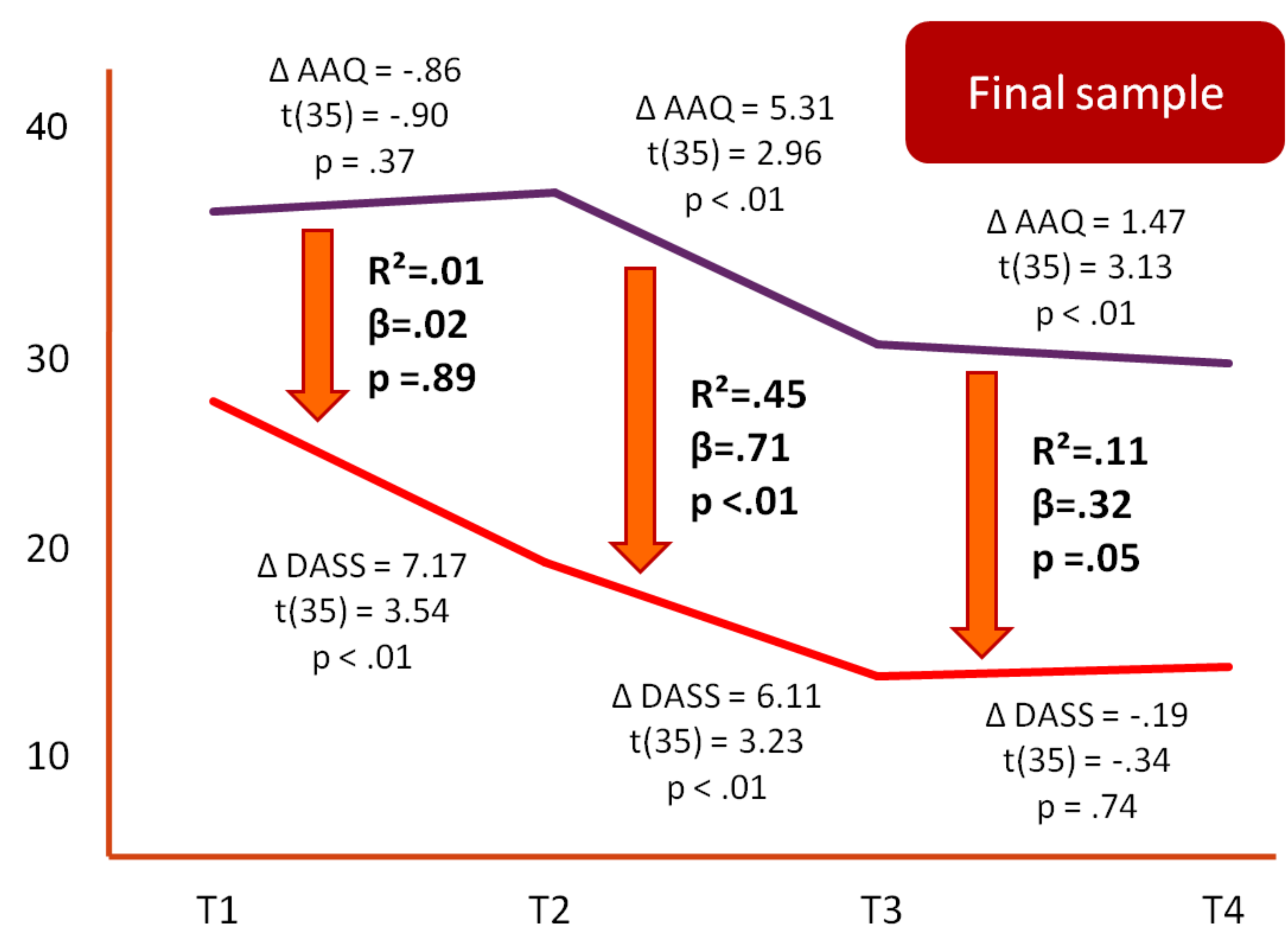
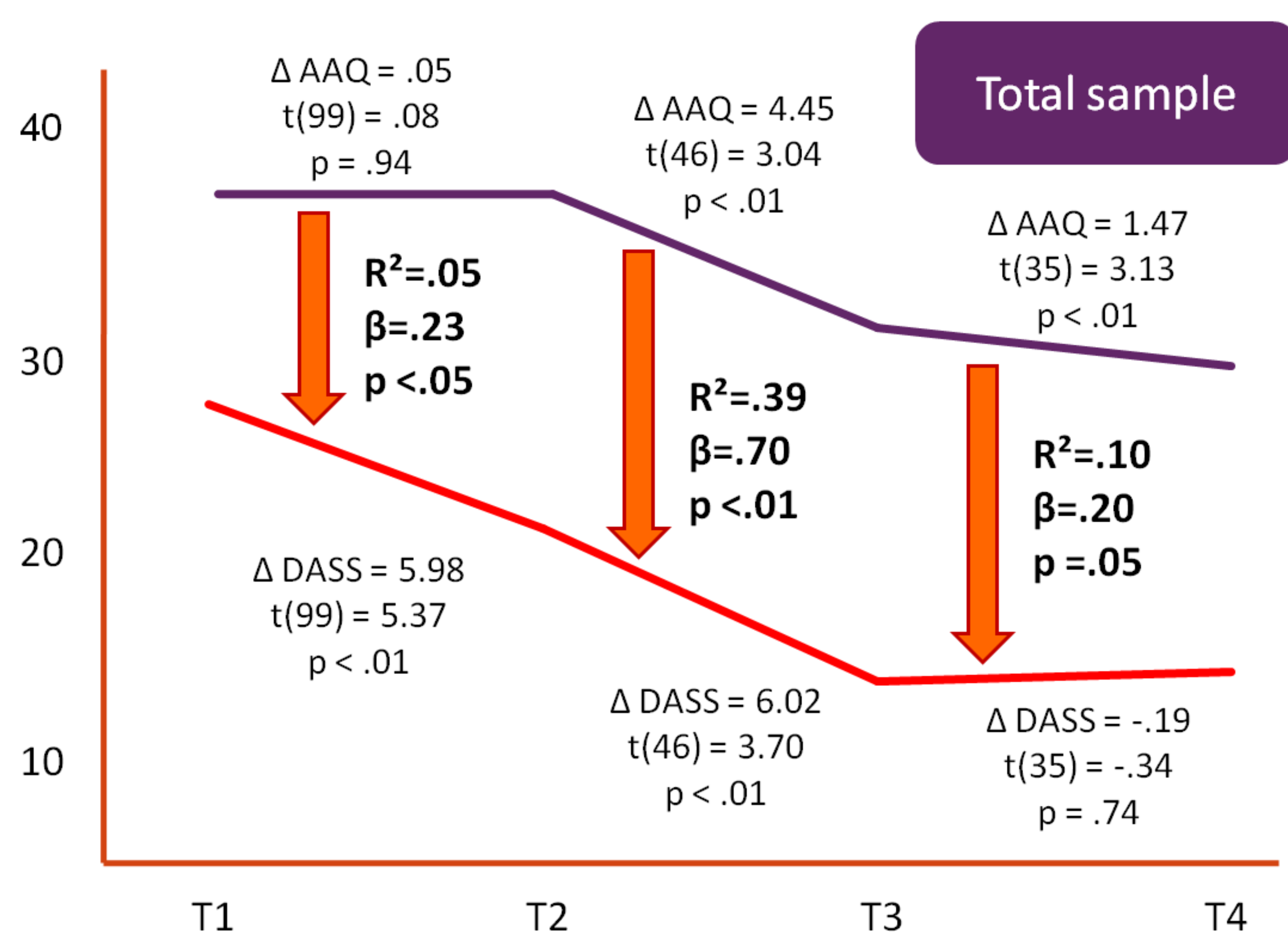
- Acceptance and Action Questionnaire II (**AAQ-II**; Bond et al, 2011) measuring psychological flexibility
- Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale 21 (**DASS-21**; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) measuring general distress
- Instruments were administered in four time points:

T1 - two weeks before the start of the treatment (n = 117)

T2 - before the first treatment session (n = 101)

T3 - after the final treatment session (n = 47)

T4 - at three months follow-up (n = 36)



**Conclusion:** The results of regression analyses performed both on the total and the final sample suggest that increase in psychological flexibility seem to be a marginally significant predictor of distress reduction before the treatment starts as well as after the end of the treatment, but highly significant during the treatment. These findings add up to the pool of empirical evidence that emphasize the role of increase of psychological flexibility as a potential mechanism of psychological change.

The research is in progress! Feel free to contact us ☺

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