

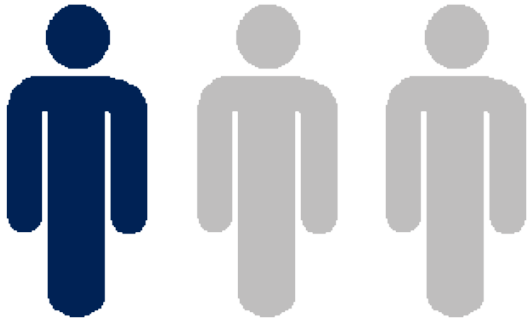
Hold Your Nerve: Impact and uptake of an ACT-based online social anxiety programme in Finnish and UK community settings

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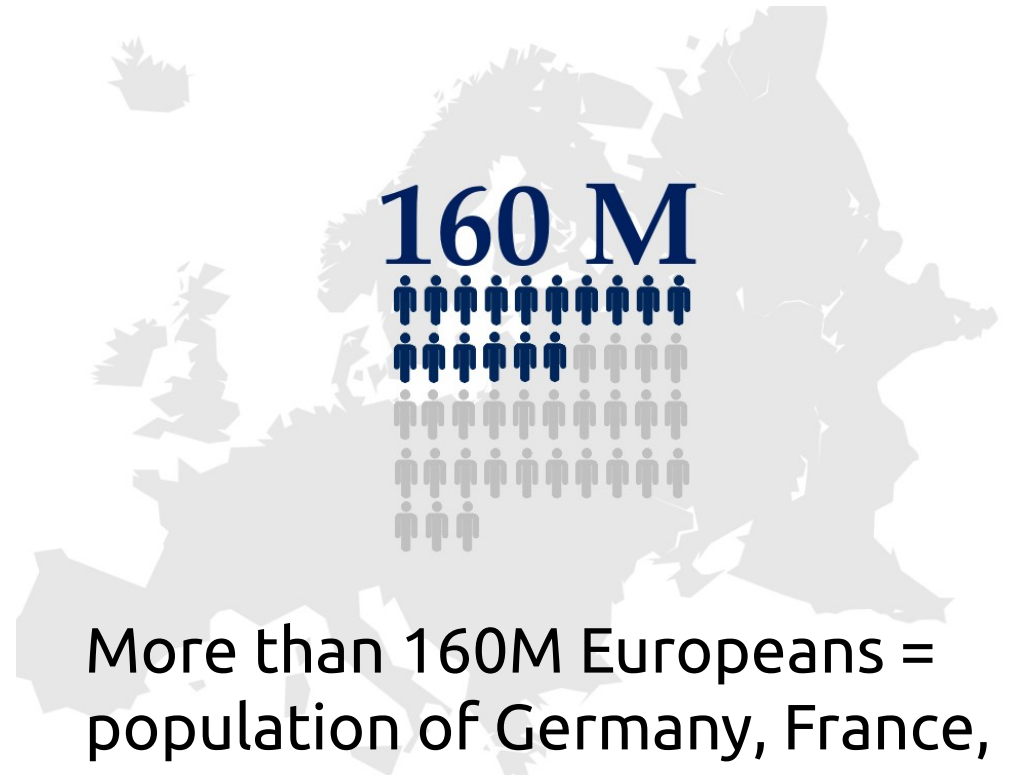
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1 in 3 suffer from
mental issues
each year



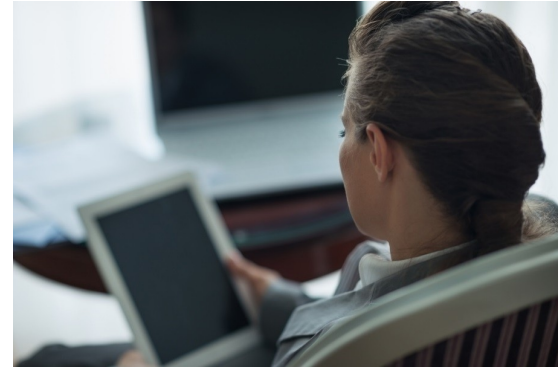
More than 160M Europeans =
population of Germany, France,
and Netherlands combined

Why online interventions?

Low
cost



Increased
access



Less
stigma





Hold Your Nerve

Research and development

Programme structure

- Independent use, recommended duration 7 weeks
- Experiential exercises
- Audio, video, short questionnaires, diary
- Actions of the week

“The programme made me think about things, and exercises were good when I took the time to repeat them.”

“I’ve been able to focus and calm down.”

The screenshot displays the Headsted website interface. At the top is an orange navigation bar with the Headsted logo and links for Solutions, About us, Why ACT?, Blog, Contact, and Hold Your Nerve. Below the navigation bar are four main content boxes, each representing a step in the programme:

- 1. Start here**: Check how anxious you are and learn to calm down.
- 2. Why so anxious?**: Understand why you get anxious and how to help yourself.
- 3. Is this thought helpful?**: Recognize unhelpful ways of coping and take distance to negative thoughts.
- 4. Connect with people**: Nurture your relationships and get support.

Below these boxes is a row of four cards, each with a green checkmark icon and a title:

- People around you
- Shopping for thoughts
- Connecting with others
- Facing people (with a progress indicator showing 2/4)

Exercise examples



Mindful moment - Focus on the present

Purpose

Learn to notice your body sensations, to calm down and focus on the present.

Listen

Read



Noticing is the first step to learning to deal with your negative thinking. What kind of negative thoughts are you struggling with?

Consider the following thoughts that often pop up in anxious situations. Do you recognize any of them?

No one likes me

I am going to fail again

I am a loser

There is something wrong with me

I want to escape

What evidence is there behind the thoughts? Why do you have them?

Put this into practice


You can do the exercise at any time and at any place. It can calm you down before challenging situations, and thus it is good to practice it every day.

Continue >



No one likes me

I am a loser



Research evidence
accumulates: ACT for
anxiety is effective

2013

First real-world pilot in
Finland

Finland

Finnish Student Health Services
City of Jyväskylä
City of Tampere
Individuals

2014

HYN 1.0: Small university
trial, real-world use

HYN 2.0: Nation-wide use
through Finnish Student
Health Services

Development of UK
version

United Kingdom

Two provider organizations

2015

Work well-being initiative

UK evaluation

Measures

Mini Social Phobia Inventory:
Scored 0-12, cutoff 6 points

Find out your level of social anxiety by answering the following three questions.

During the past week, how much have you been bothered by the following?

	Not at all			Very much	
Fear of embarrassment causes me to avoid doing things or speaking to people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Being embarrassed or looking stupid are among my worst fears.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I avoid activities in which I am the centre of attention.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Save >

User experiences:
Five weeks after
registration

Usage activity

Feeling anxious?

Our seven-week online programme for social anxiety symptoms can help. Available in the UK early 2015.



Hold Your Nerve

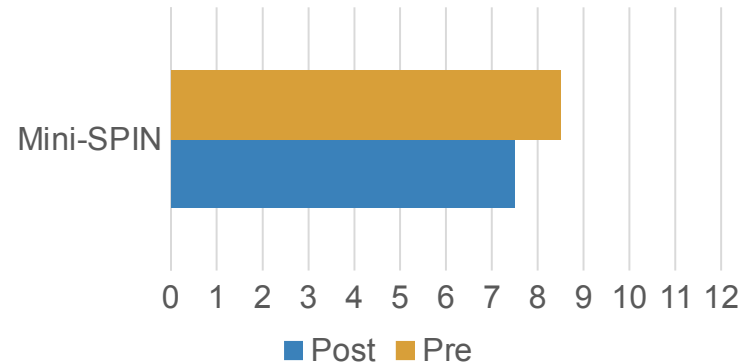
Impact and uptake

Impact and uptake: Finland

July 17, 2015:

- ❑ 1538 registered users
- ❑ 184 (12.0%) completed post-survey
 - 128 sought help for anxiety
 - 56 were professionals
- ❑ More than **98%** would recommend
 - 124 (98%) of anxious users
 - 55 (99%) of professionals

Mini Social Phobia Inventory



Change: -0.94 ($p < 0.001$)

Subjective improvement:
71/128 (55%)

Feedback: Finland

“The programme is **nice and easy to use**. This is really needed!”

“The programme made me think about social anxiety a lot, and anxiety became more mundane and **easier to accept**. I also noted that anxiety has no more power over my life than what I grant for it.”

“The challenges pushed me outside my comfort zone and I told others about my anxiety symptoms. The programme was an **eye-opener** and I got more **confident** thanks to it.”

“I learned to understand that others’ opinions are not the truth and I should **not take them too seriously**. I don’t have to listen to my own thoughts blindly.”

“Psychologists are **excited** about the programme. Online services can reach more students.”

“I have used the programme with a few of my clients. I like it! **Guided** structure and **clear** instructions are effective.”

“A CEO talking about their **own anxiety**, you don’t see that anywhere else.”

“Makes it easier to **start discussions** and move forward with youth.”

Challenges

Individual use	Solutions
Too fast pace	6-day limit between sessions, reminders
Lack of motivation to do the exercises	Point out immediate benefits, how to easily apply in everyday life
Technical problems, compatibility issues	Continuous testing and improvement

Dissemination	Solutions
Reach and visibility	Multiple channels to promote the programme
Fitting into different delivery models	Design several blended models for organizations
Skepticism towards ACT & online tools	More research & synthesis of evidence

Conclusions

- Real-world outcomes are promising, although attrition is high
- Impact seems to be better with human contact
- Implementation models need more attention

Other programmes

Shift Your Stress

ACT methods reduce stress and improve performance and creativity (Flaxman & Bond 2010)

"I've learned to listen to others better."



Good Life Compass

Significant reduction in depressive symptoms (Lappalainen et al. 2014)

"I feel I'm living my life - thank you!"

Restful Sleep

Less sleep problems, better sleep quality (Langrial et al. 2014)

"I'm no longer bothered by waking up during the night and I sleep more."



Thank you!

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