

Psychological Flexibility in Participants in an ACT for Substance Abuse Recovery Group

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INTRO:

- Psychological flexibility processes are thought to moderate clinically relevant changes in psychotherapy.
- ACT interventions have been shown to increase psychological flexibility (Ciarocchi, Bilich, & Godsel, 2010) and changes in psychological flexibility are related to substance abuse treatment outcomes (Luoma et al., 2008).
- The purpose of this study was to understand how psychological flexibility, self-compassion, and substance use behavior are related and change over time among participants in an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) group for clients with substance use disorders.

METHODS:

- Nine adults with substance use disorders participated in a 12-week group, "ACT for Recovery." This intervention consists of three 4-week modules (Open Up, Be Present, Take Action). Data was collected at baseline, and at the end of every module. Measures included the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire – Substance Abuse (AAQ-SA), Self-Compassion Scale-Short Form (SCS-SF), the Satisfaction with Life Scale, (SWLS), and the Brief Addiction Monitor (BAM).

RESULTS:

- Preliminary results from the first 9 participants indicate that, at baseline, the AAQ-SA and the SCS-SF are tending to correlate ($r = -.59, p < .10$). In addition, visual inspection of data plots indicate that participants whose AAQ-SA scores improve are also more likely to report maintaining abstinence over time.

DISCUSSION:

- These preliminary results provide support for continuing to explore psychological flexibility processes in an ACT group for individuals with substance use disorders. We are curious about the relationship between substance use and psychological flexibility and are actively seeking to better move the processes of psychological flexibility to benefit people who are actively abusing substances.

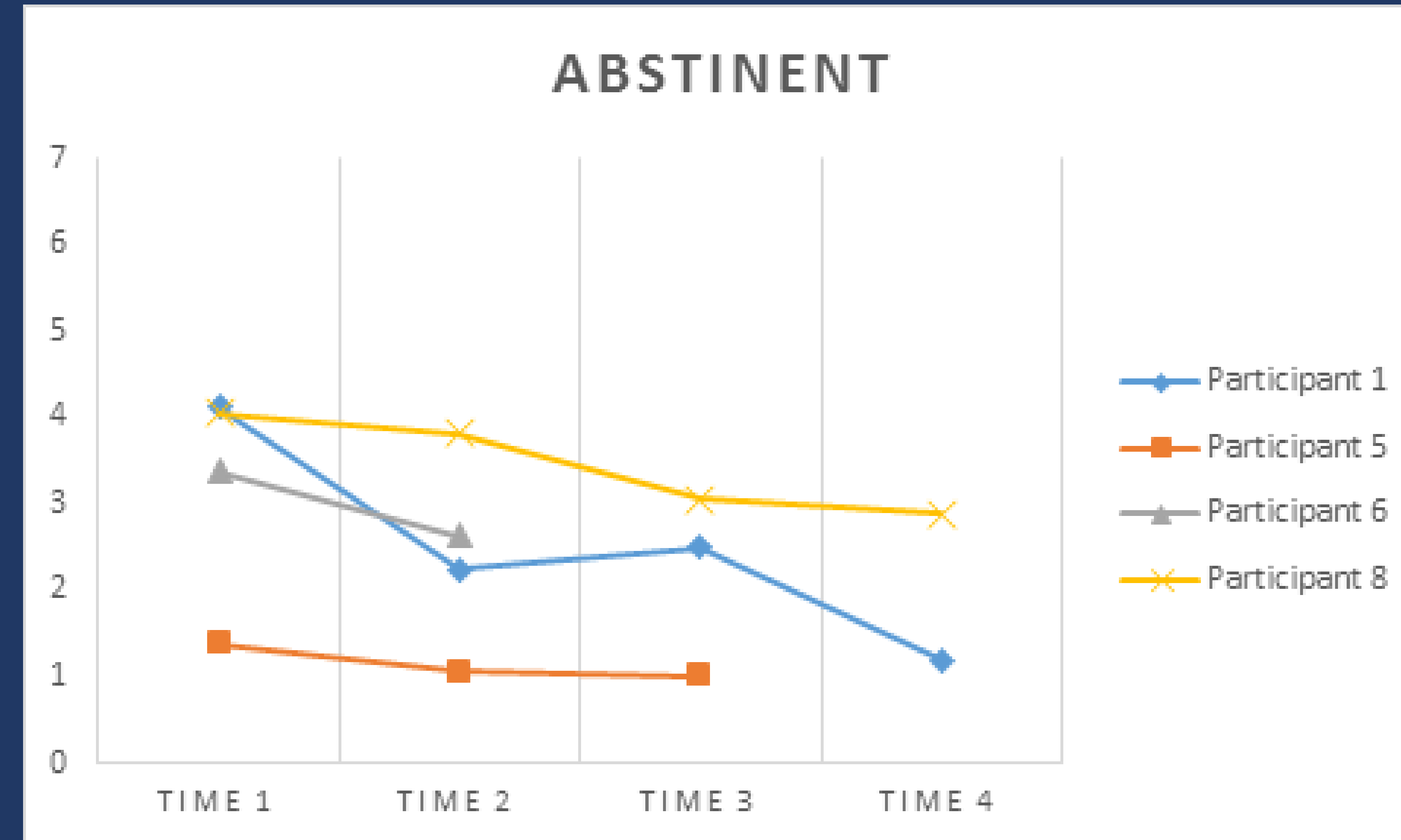


Figure 1. Scores on the AAQ-SA for group participants who were abstinent from substance abuse. Lower scores reflect more psychological flexibility.

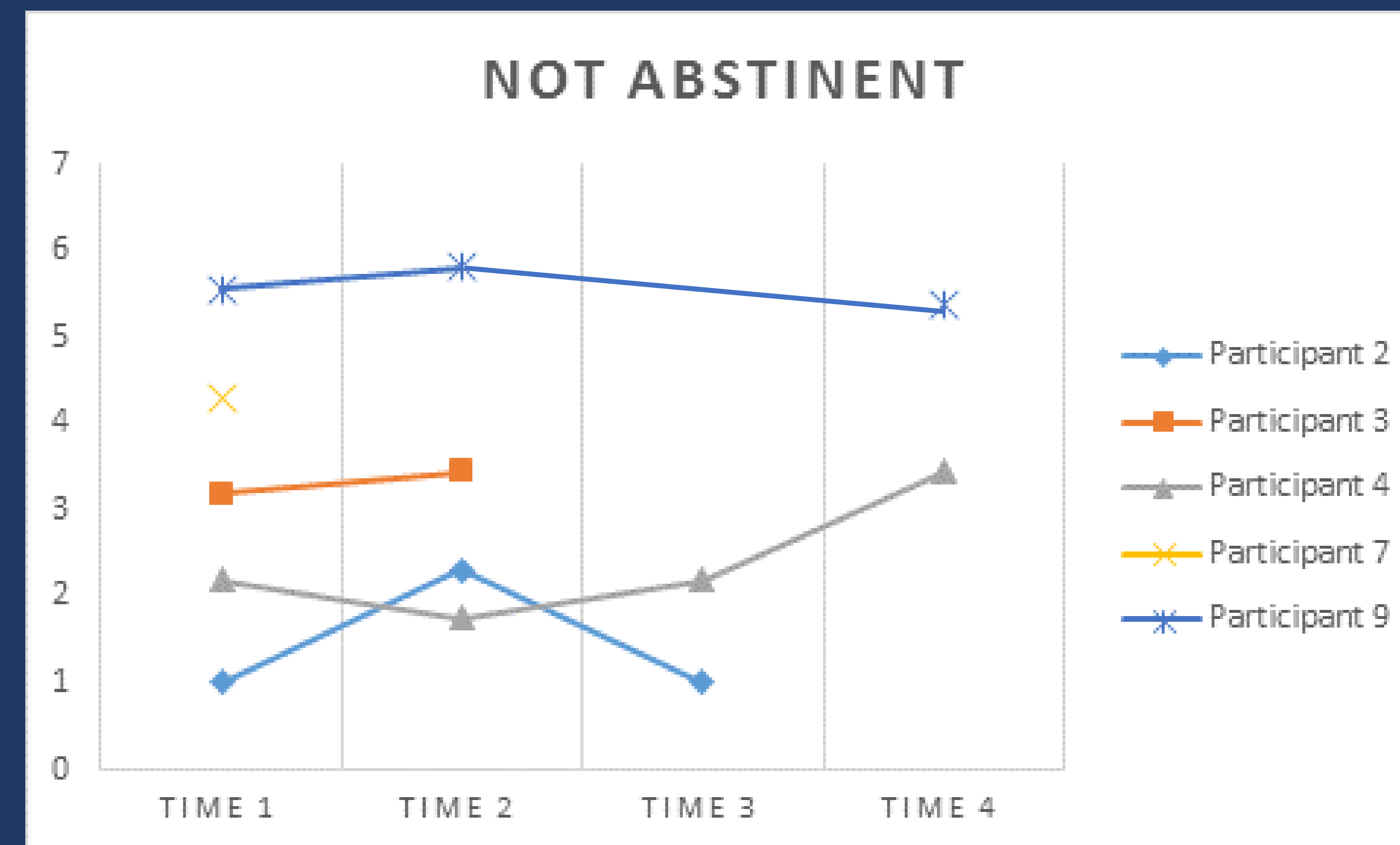
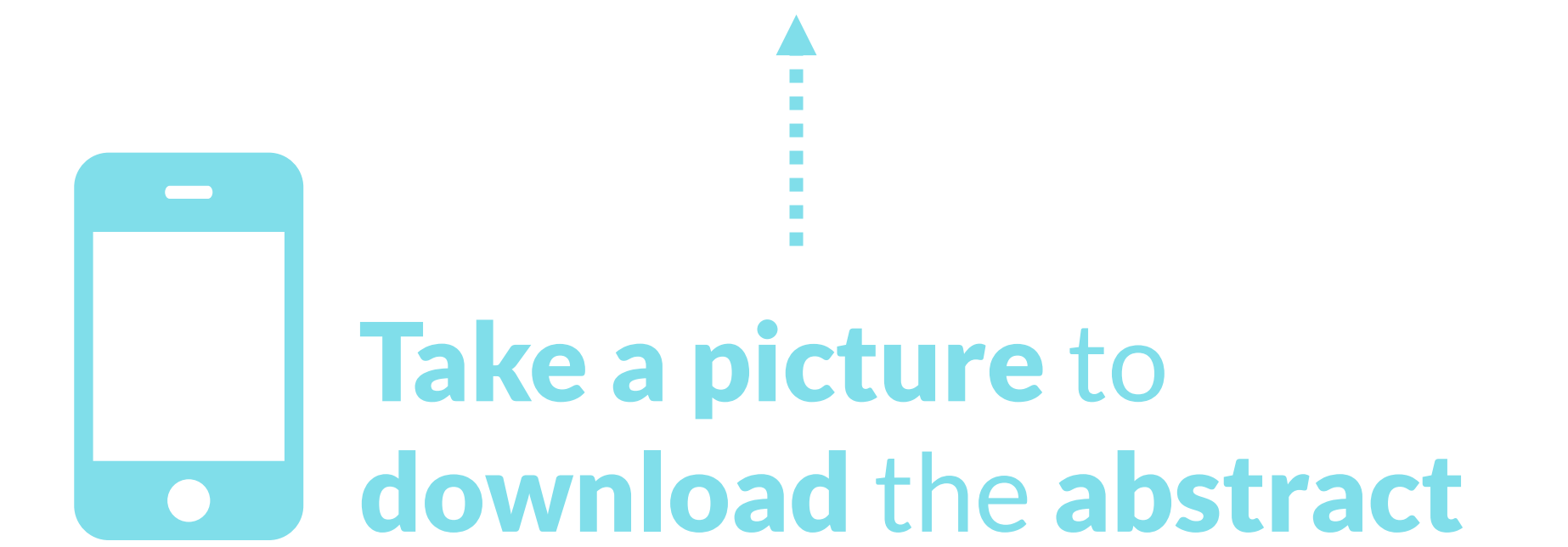


Figure 2. Scores on the AAQ-SA for group participants who were not abstinent from substances during the group.



Measure	Time 1 (N=9)	Time 2 (N=8)	Time 3 (N=5)	Time 4 (N=4)
AAQ-SA	3.24	2.88	1.95	3.22
SCS-SF	3.15	3.38	3.38	2.87
SWLS	14.11	16.25	17.40	15.75

Table 1. Mean scores for participants on the AAQ-SA, the SCS-SF, and the SWLS at pre-treatment and after completion of each of the three modules. Higher AAQ-SA scores reflect greater substance-related psychological inflexibility (scale = 1-7); higher SCS-SF scores reflect higher self-compassion (scale = 1-5) and higher SWLS scores reflect higher satisfaction with life (scale = 5-35).



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