

ACT-informed exposure for social anxiety in children



WHY DID I DO IT?

- Social anxiety is one of the most common anxiety disorders among children, adolescents and early adults. (Salari, et. al, 2024)
- Being exposure therapy the gold standard when treating anxiety disorders (Abramowitz, 2019.)
- Combining ACT with exposure can be extremely helpful in order to enhance tratment outcomes and adherence to treatment, helping to consolidate inhibitory learning, preventing dropout rate (Farley, 2024)

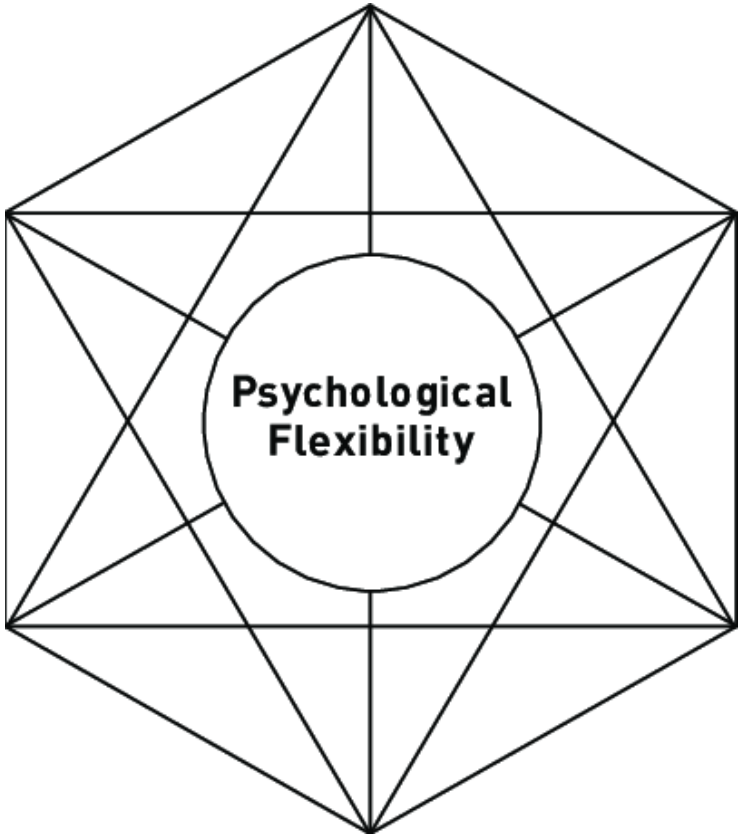
WHAT DID I USE?

- Functional Assesment
- Clinical interview
- Psychometric instruments

Across 18 Sessions total, without follow-up. 8 months total

LOOKING THROUGH ACT LENSES

-Unawareness of positive social outcomes, delibarate mental distraction when speaking in front of a group of people



-Avoidance of anxiety-provoking situations, relying on safety behaviors

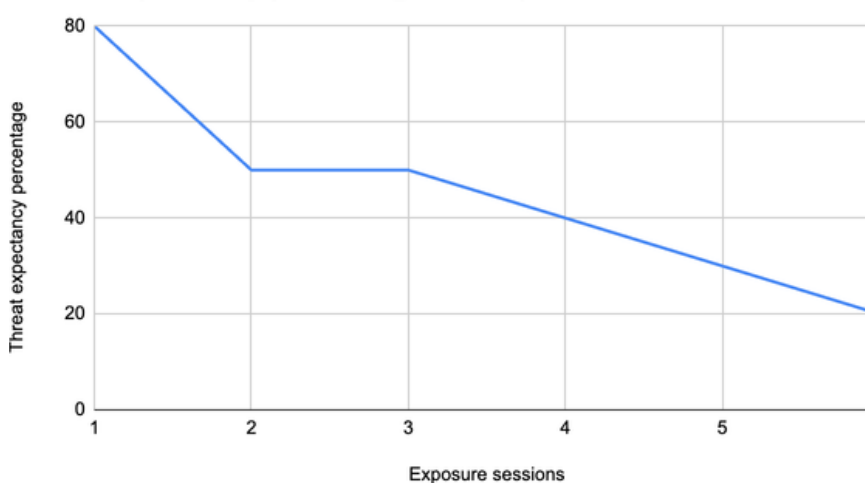
-Cognitive fusion with thoughts such as: “I’m going to be laughed at”, high expectancy of a negative result

-Behavior oriented towards distress reduction only, disconnection with values and goals

-Lack of social skills, negative impact on social and academic area

WHAT DID I GET?

Threat expectancy percentage vs Exposure sessions



9 exposure sessions total, testing the same expected negative outcome within different situations and contexts

Test Scores before vs after exposure sessions



Test scores pre and post treatment

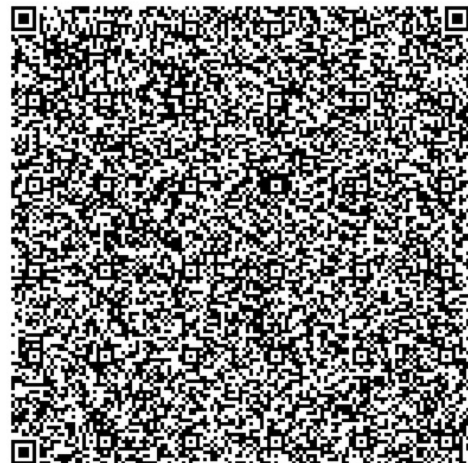
-Conceptualized self, with thoughts such as “i’m shy” “I don’t do well in this scenarios” “ It’s not going to work out for me”

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References:



Merging ACT with exposure therapy contributed to:

- Reducing threat expectancy session to session
- Link exposure to personal values and goals
- Reducing anxiety responses