

# **A comparison of cognitive restructuring versus defusion as coping strategies for negative thoughts**

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# Aims

- \* compare different contemporary ways of dealing with negative private content
- \* test the delivery of reminders through text messages

**Socratic questioning**

**Clinical Handbook of  
Psychological Disorders**

**THIRD  
EDITION**

**Restructuring**

**Disputing**

# Design

- \* Pre and post measures:
- \* BDI-2, AAQ-2, STAI, PANAS
- \* Rate negative and positive thoughts on Believability, Negativity, Comfortability and Willingness
- \* Generate and rate a negative self-directed thought that your score as Highly on all scales
- \* Daily thought logs

**I am a failure.**

**My life is pointless.**

**I am stupid.**

**I am a bad person.**

**I make a mess of everything.**

**I am broken.**

**I am ugly.**

**I am helpless.**

**Sometimes I wish I wasn't me.**

**No-one will ever love me.**

**that I will always have friends.**

**I have no problems that can't be solved.**

**I am proud of myself.**

**I am whole.**

**I love life.**

**I know that I am loved.**

**I am happy with who I am.**

**There is so much that I can do with my life.**

**There is so much for me to be happy about.**

**I am part of a beautiful world.**

**When things go wrong I know that I will  
always have friends.**

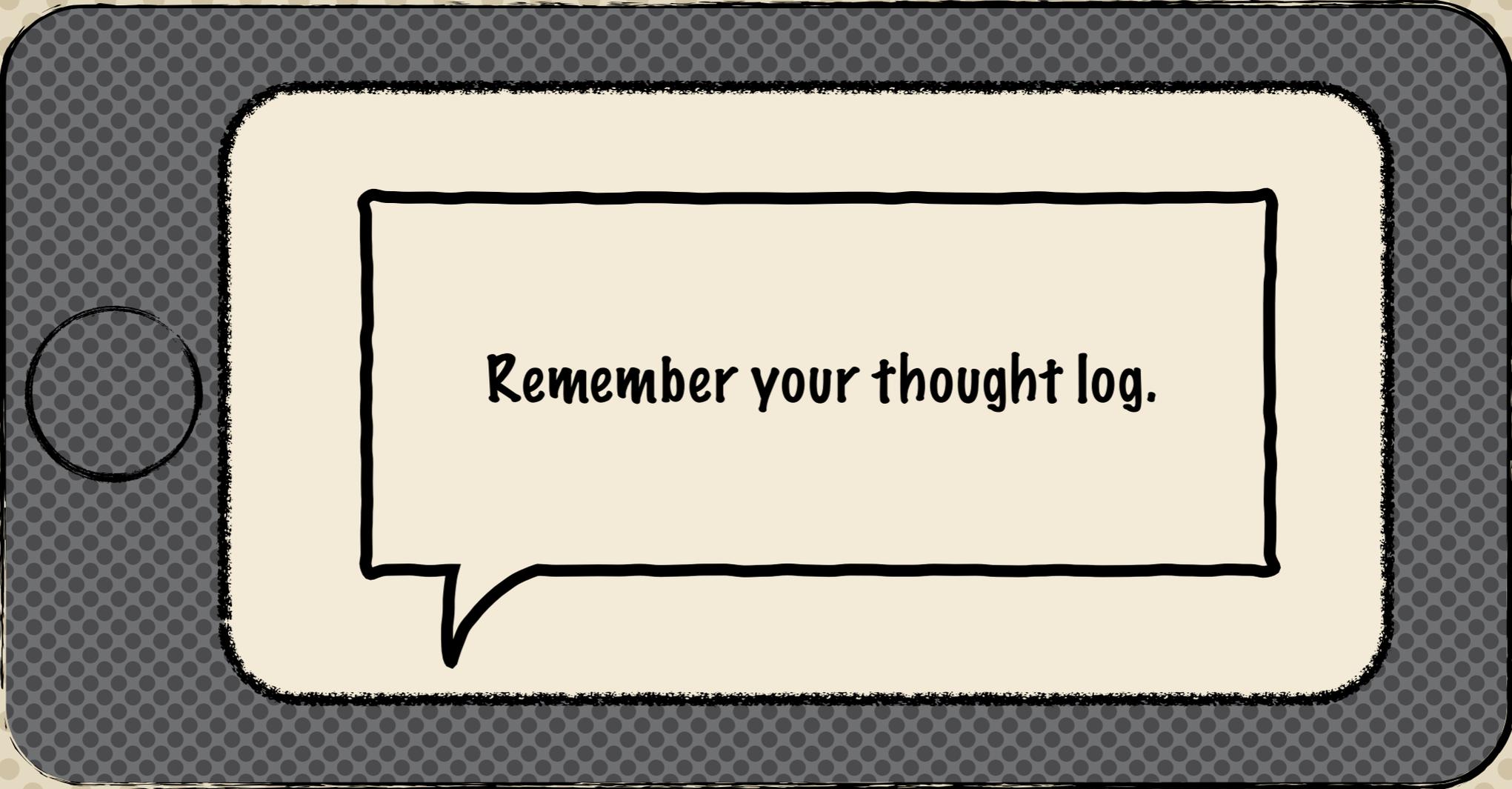
**I have no problems that can't be solved.**

**I am proud of myself.**

**I am whole.**

**Healy et al 2010**

# Text reminder (control group)



Remember your thought log.

# Conditions

- \* Cognitive Restructuring
- \* Defusion
- \* Control



# Defusion

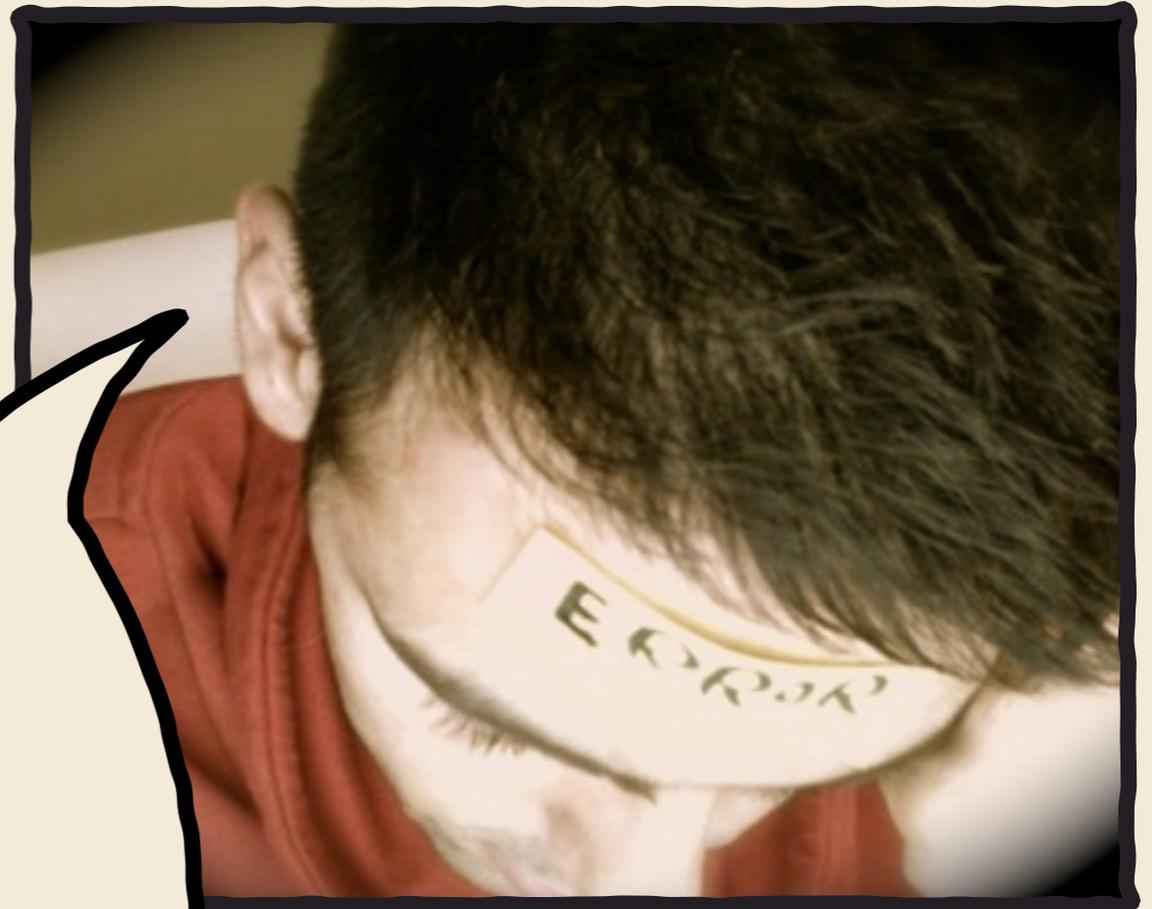
- \* Musical thoughts
- \* Silly voices
- \* I'm having the thought

# Defusion

Remember your thought log. And remember that a thought is just a thought.

# Cognitive restructuring

- \* Identify Thinking Error
- \* Examine thought
- \* Generate Alternative



# Thinking errors

Catastrophizing  
Black or white thinking  
Overgeneralization  
Fortune-telling  
Mind-reading  
Mental filtering  
Disqualifying the positive  
Labeling  
Emotional reasoning  
Personalizing  
Demanding  
Low frustration tolerance

# Restructuring

Examine the thought  
What evidence exists  
against this thought?

Generate Alternative  
What do I need to think in  
order to act and feel  
differently?

# Cognitive restructuring

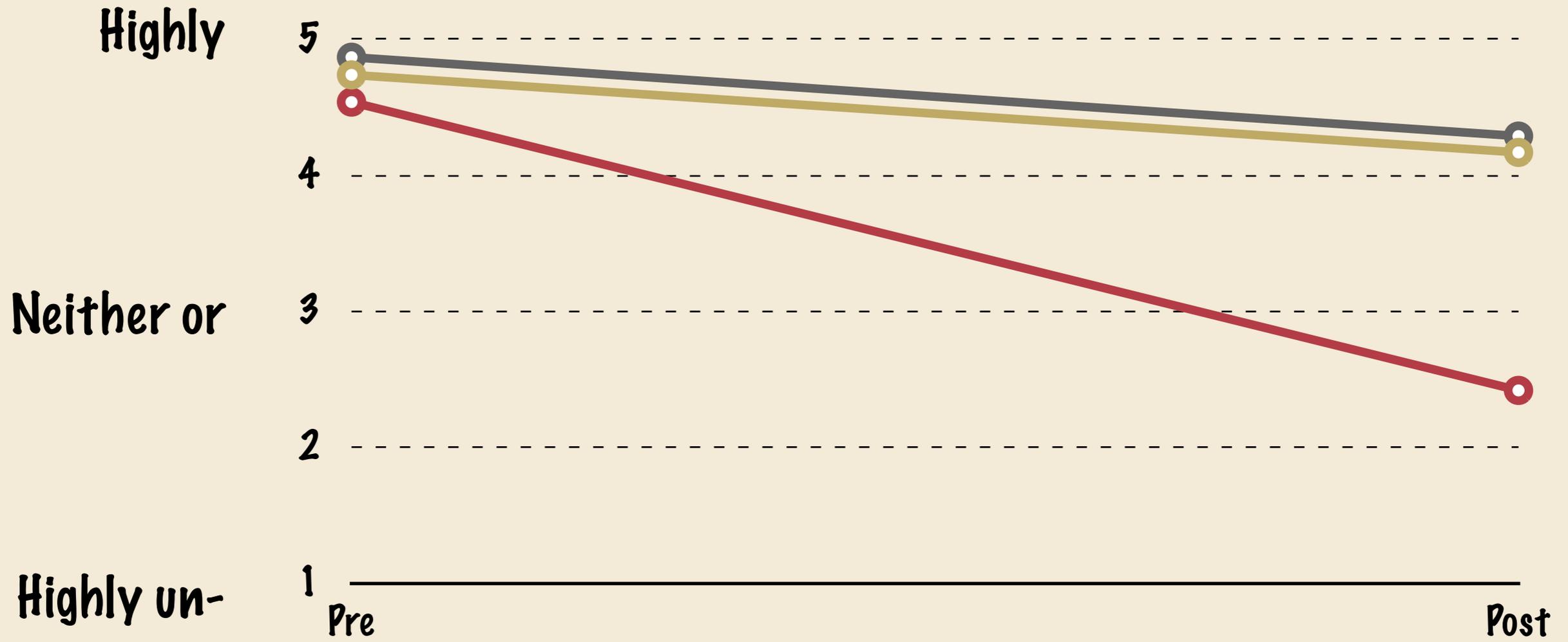
Remember to overcome your negative thought by identifying the thinking error and generate an alternative! Don't forget the thought log!

○ No Instruction

○ Defusion



○ Restructuring



**Believability**

○ No Instruction

○ Defusion



○ Restructuring



Highly

5

4

Neither or

3

2

Highly un-

1

Pre

Post

# Comfortability



○ No Instruction

○ Defusion

○ Restructuring

Highly Negative

5

4

Neither or

3

2

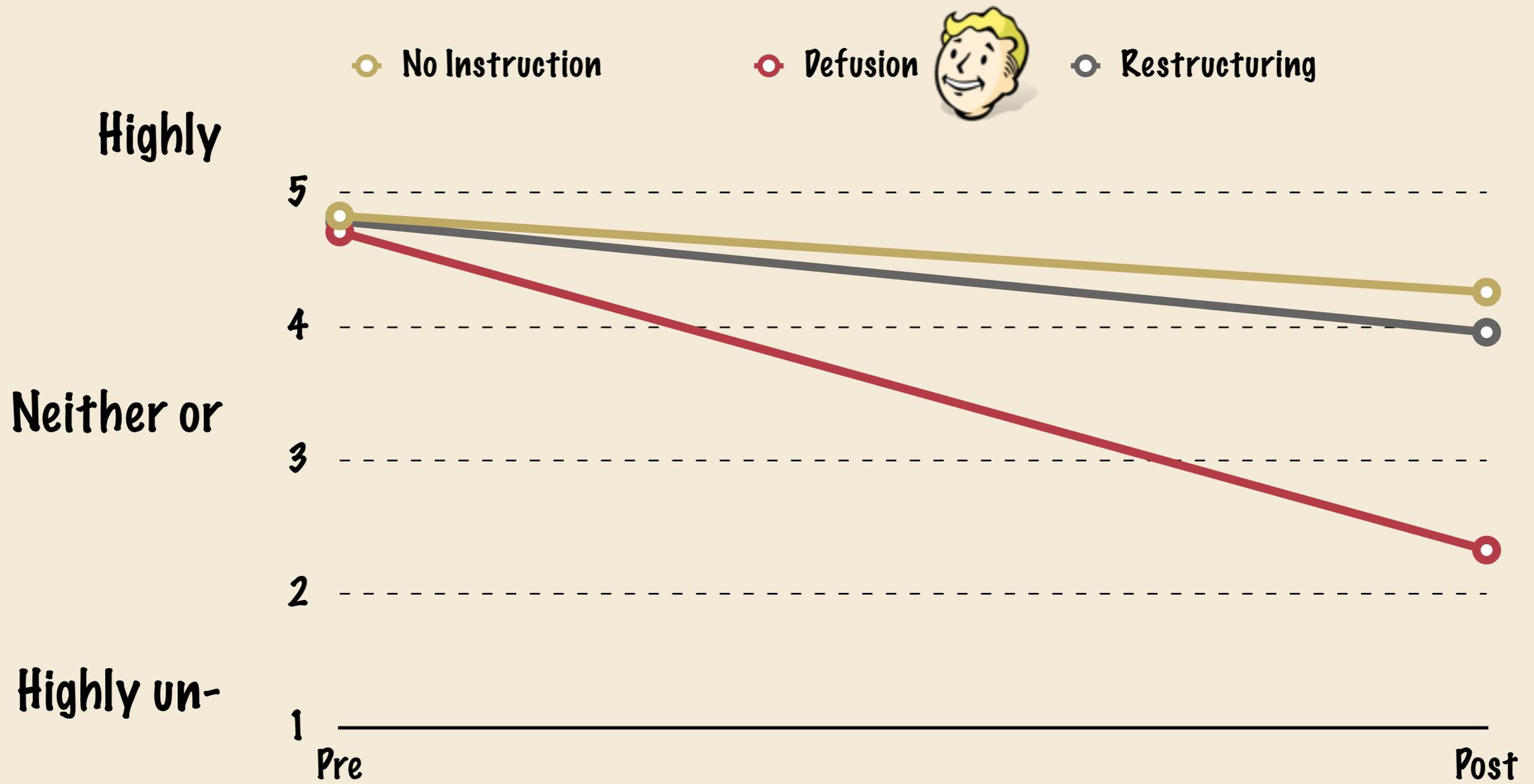
Highly Positive

1

Pre

Post

**Negativity**



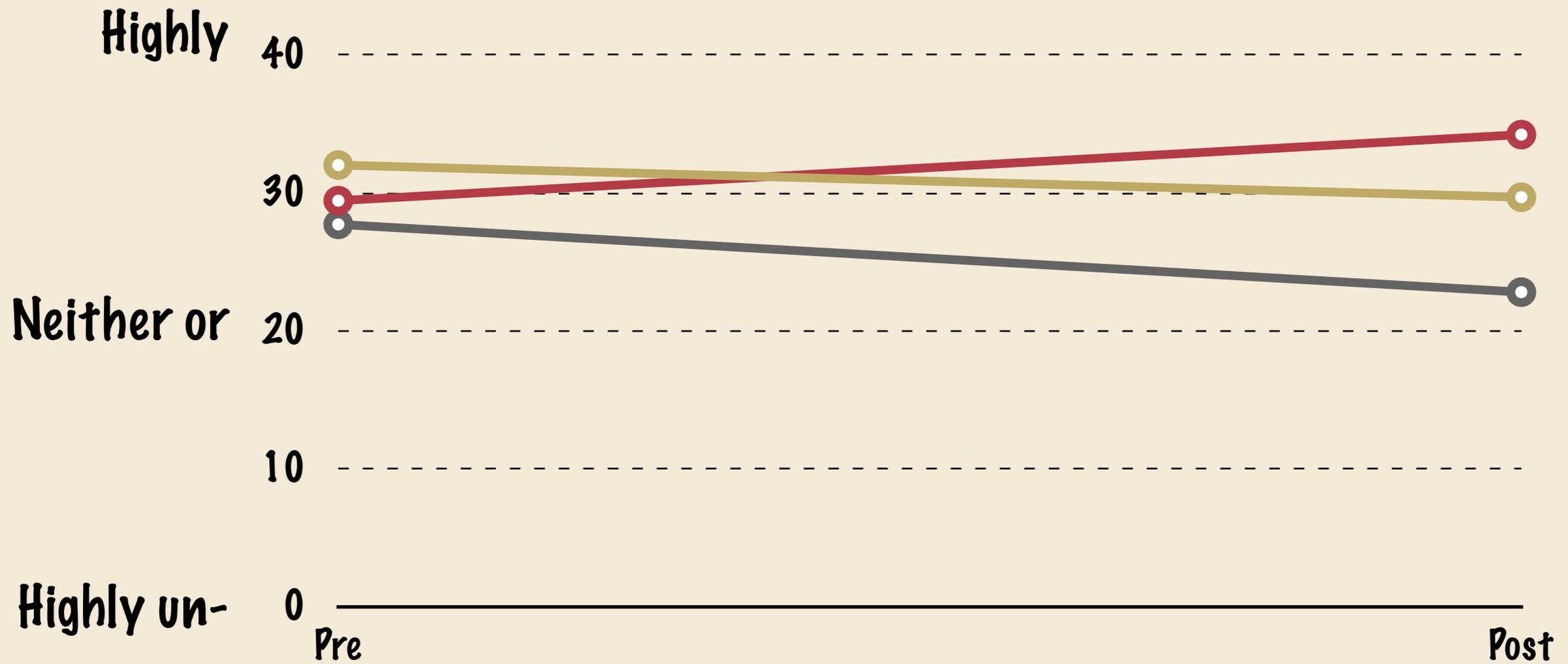
**Willingness**

○ Restructuring

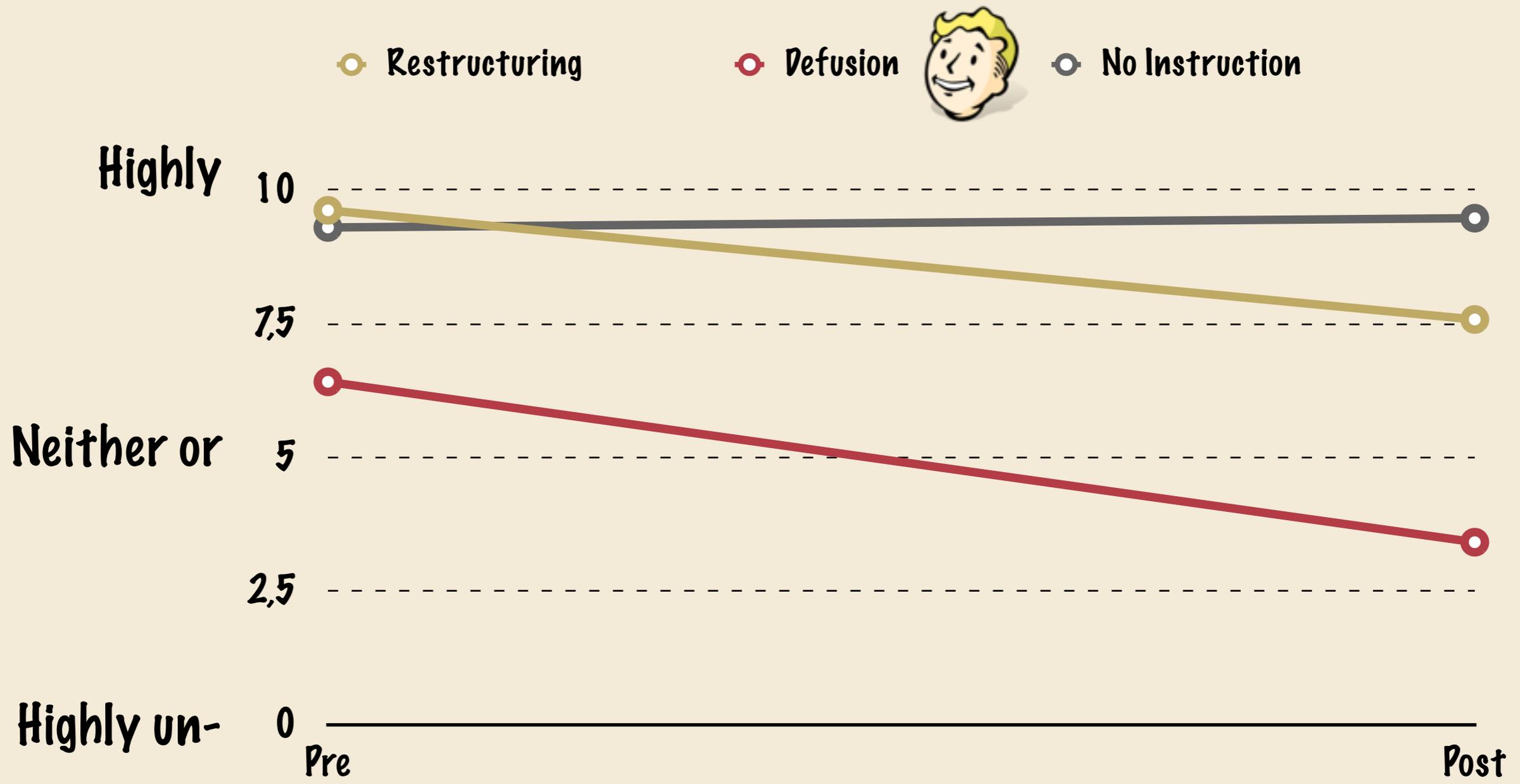
○ Defusion



○ No Instruction



**Positive Affect**



**Depression**

○ No Instruction

○ Defusion



○ Restructuring



**POSITIVE THOUGHTS  
BELIEVABLE**

# Conclusion

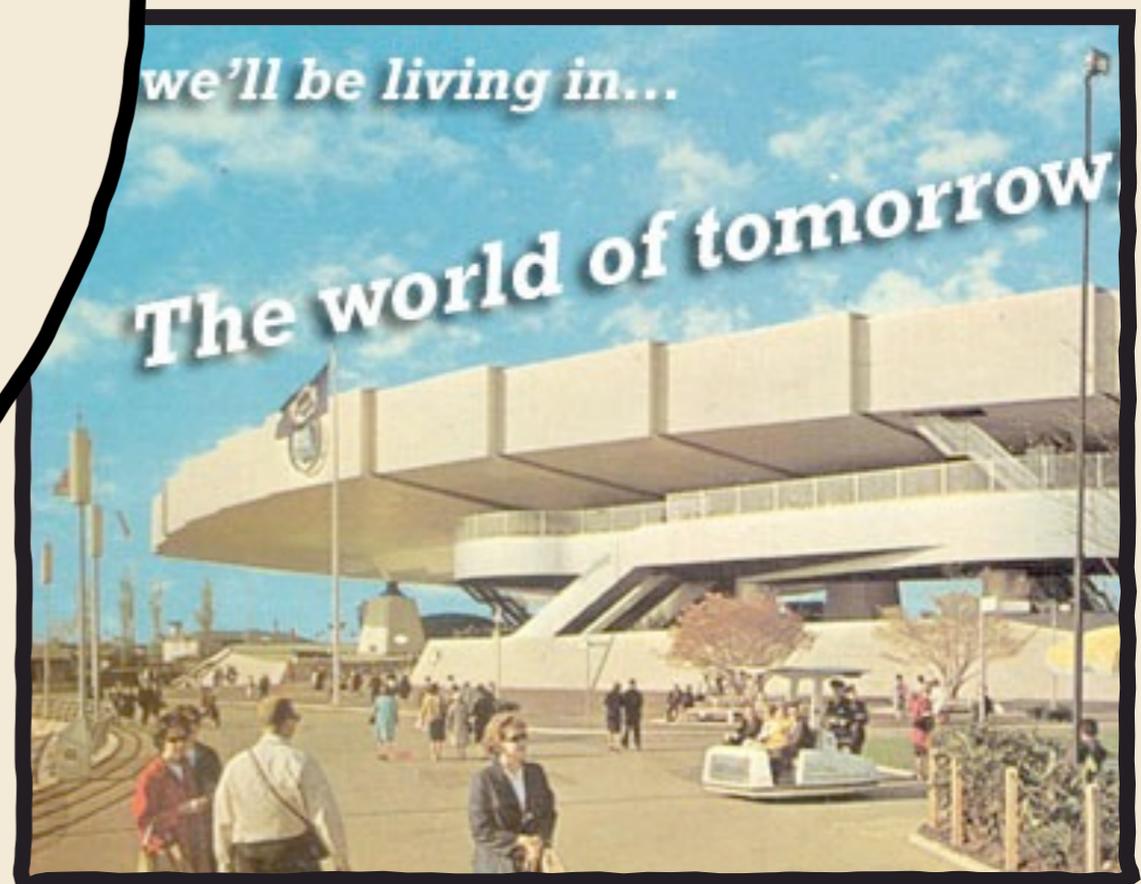
Defusion over text messaging is a promising way to deliver support and defusion is superior to Reconstructing for

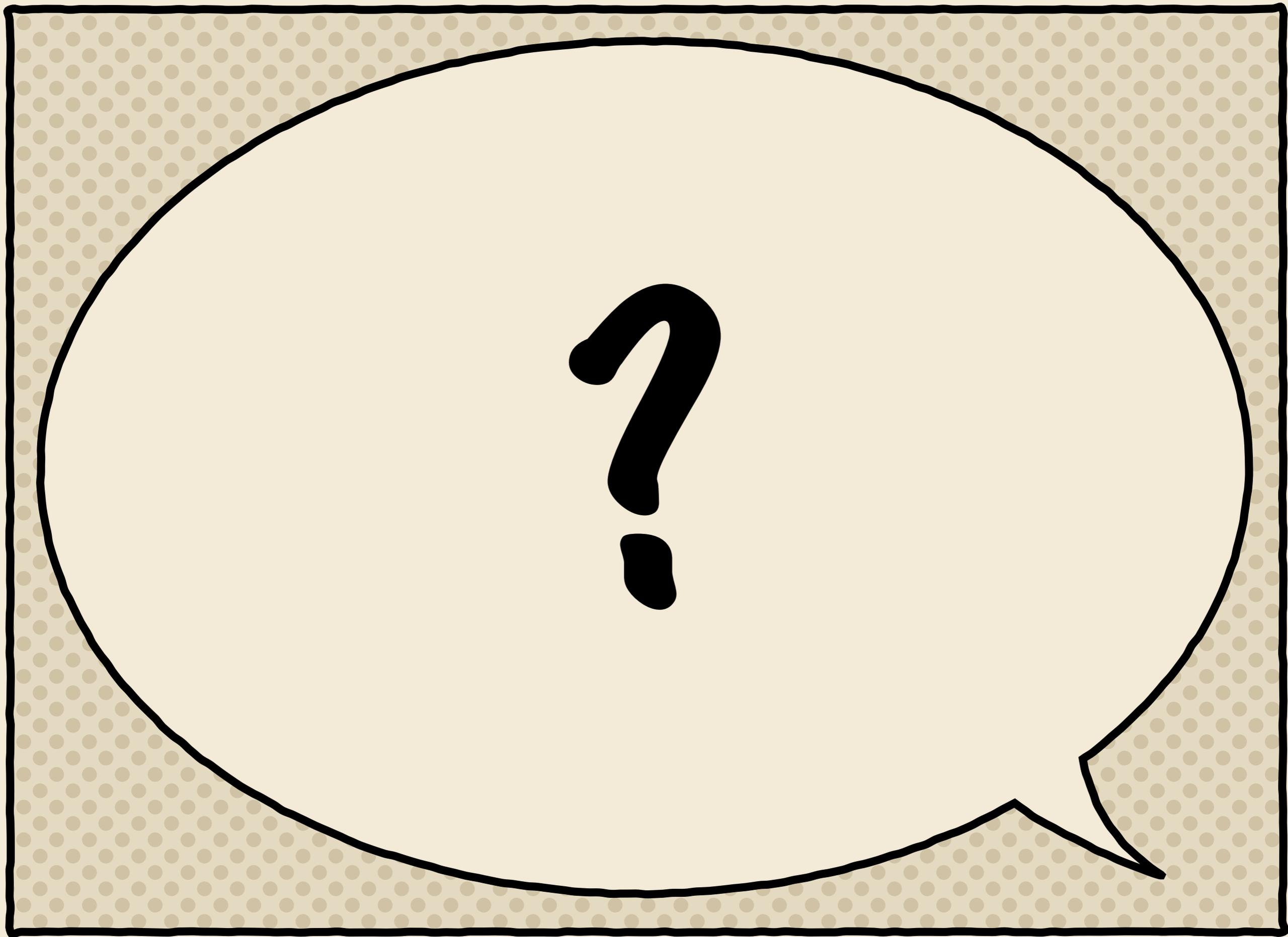
Disbelieving thought  
Being more comfortable with thought  
and  
Willingness to have thoughts



# Future directions

Follow up  
Wider range of ratings  
More "On-line"  
Passive control  
Behavioral measures of flexibility





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