

# Wellcome Presentation Interview

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## **Surprises as a Mechanism of Improvement in the Psychological Therapy of Anxiety and Depression in Young People**

Young people are often affected by social anxiety *and* depression and are particularly impaired.

Some of these young people improve substantially with treatment—we ask:

*how* do they improve—what are the causal mechanisms and can we maximise them?

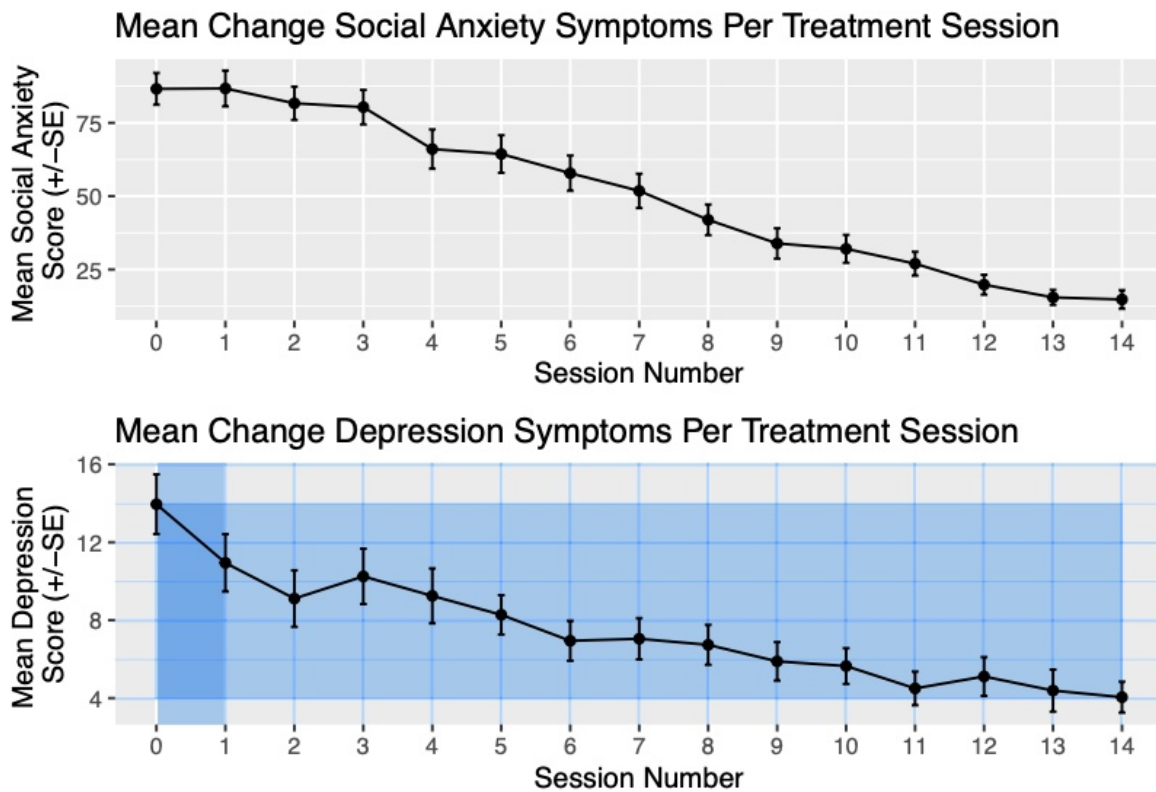
*who* improves—could we tell you will get better in advance?

*whether* the way we pursue improvement is relevant and acceptable

## **Social Anxiety and Depression co-occur**

- Two of the most common conditions in young people that co-occur at high frequency
- Their co-occurrence causes a higher burden to individuals.

## Social Anxiety and Depression can be effectively treated



## What is the active ingredient of the treatment?

*Surprises:* a better outcome than expected.

Surprises underlie learning.

Surprises shape affect in the moment.

## What is the active ingredient of the treatment?

*Self processing variables:*

- *self-focused attention*
- *safety behaviours*
- *negative self image*

**What is the active ingredient of the treatment?**

maximise surprises

shift self-processing variables

**WP1: Establish what is causal about the intervention**

**WP2: Develop computational models**

**WP3: Identify neural and interoceptive markers of social interactions.**

**WP4: Create ecologically valid, scalable version of experiment**

**WP5: Trial efficacy of active ingredient**

**WP5: Inter-individual differences**

**WPX: Establish ethical and epistemic viability of manipulations**