What is the effect of the eCoach on the treatment of a patient with social phobia?

* What are the advantages of an eCoach ?
  + Patients don’t have to travel to another city, possibly during rush hour, because they can just do the therapy at home.
  + The environment, in which the patients are exposed, can be manipulated in every way, whereas real life with real human beings can’t.

Some manipulations:

* + - Gender, age, ethnicity.
    - Quantity of avatars in the environment.
    - Responses of every avatar can be controlled.
  + The eCoach isn’t a replacement for the actual therapist, it is only a form of treatment, which is still guided by a real therapist, doing it from the convenience of his own home.
  + All progress that a patients makes and all parameters that can be measured from a patient, such as SUD scores, will be automatically saved and send to a database. So the therapist doesn’t have to do it himself and he/she can have access to it anywhere and anytime in the form of diagrams and/or graphs.
  + The eCoach can also talk outside the exposure to the patient, about what the patient experiences outside the sessions in real life for example. Now the therapist also does, but most of the time the therapist feigns interest, he/she only does it as a courtesy to the patient.
  + Because the therapist doesn’t need to do everything by himself during an exposure, it reduces the workload of a therapist. Now the therapist has more time to closely monitor the patient’s progress and can adjust treatment accordingly. Also he is able to deal with more patients because of the time benefit.1

1 ter Heijden, N., and Brinkman, W.-P. (2011). Design and Evaluation of a Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy System with Automatic Free Speech Interaction. *Journal of CyberTherapy and Rehabilitation, 4*(1). 41-55