# What is needed to ensure the positive effect?

So far it has been pointed out that virtual exposure at home is at least as effective as in vivo treatment. But what is needed to achieve this result? Different properties will be discussed here. First the visibility of the avatar will be discussed. Secondly the appearance of the avatar will be discussed. And as last the contribution of the facial expressions of the avatar.

The avatar that interacts with the patient as an eCoach must not only be heard, but also seen [1]. It can enhance the idea that the eCoach is actually present in the same room. Whether the avatar was static or dynamic didn’t really seem to matter, but being visible did.

The appearance of this visible avatar also matters. Different test have been done with groups that were allowed to choose their own coaching avatar, and others that were appointed an avatar based on professional analysis [1]. Most of the time patients didn’t choose the avatar that suited them best, so it better not to let the patient choose the avatar for his/her coach. It would be good though to let the therapist choose an appropriate avatar.

Also the use of facial expressions contributes to the effect of the eCoach. The visible emotions (such as sad or neutral) enhance the idea of empathy of the avatar [2] and hence will increases the anthropomorphic experience of the avatar.

[1] Promoting motivation with virtual agents and avatars: role of visual presence and appearance - Amy L. Baylor - <https://blackboard.tudelft.nl/bbcswebdav/pid-2010713-dt-content-rid-6846174_2/courses/26889-121303/promoting%20motivation%20with%20virutal%20agents%20and%20avatars%20role%20of%20visual%20presence%20and%20appearance_Baylor.pdf>

[2] An online lifestyle diary with a persuasive computer assistant providing feedback on self-management - Olivier A. Blanson Henkemansa*,*b*,∗*, Paul J.M. van der Boogc, Jasper Lindenbergb,

Charles A.P.G. van der Masta, Mark A. Neerincxa*,*b and Bertie J.H.M. Zwetsloot-Schonkc (blackboard)