Intro Outline

1. Exposure is one of the most effective treatments for anxiety disorders
   1. However, can be aversive and lots of people don’t seek treatment and quit early
2. Multivoxel neuro-reinforcement was developed to circumvent this problem
   1. It rewards unconscious activation of a neural category representation of a feared animal
   2. Previous research has found that it can decrease amygdala activity in response to feared animals
3. However, the mechanics of neuro-reinforcement are still understudied
   1. Other studies have looked at the mechanics of neuro-reinforcement for phobia (look at previous research here)

500 – 1000 words for intro total

Don’t get too specific with number 4

Don’t focus on repeating decnef itself

Focus on how mechanics are understudied, uncertain, unmet needs,

This is a look to see what kinds of changes we can see before/after

Not quite exploratory but as part of a greater study reported elsewhere, looked at differences in functional connectivity in resting state

Hypothesis: Would make sense if changes in connectivity were in visual area

Expected to see something broadly in the VT area because of where decnef was rewarding

Hypothesis: Would make sense if these changes were related to amygdala

Only predict what is directly justified by the literature

“Unrestricted connectivity analysis”

Look at decnef intro for verbiage

Move to discussion:

1. Decnef was specifically reinforcing the Ventral Temporal Cortex, which is implicated in discriminating between categories of visual stimuli
   1. HOW DO I CONNECT THIS TO THE RESTING STATE CHANGES AND THEN AMYGDALA CHANGES
   2. Following neuro-feedback, we expect that connectivity with the areas of the brain that handle visual category discrimination would increase
      1. Can observe this change during resting state
2. We hypothesize that the greater change of these visual category discriminating areas (as measured during resting state) would also be related to greater reductions in amygdala activity because the extinction effect would be greater
   1. The better participants are at these unconscious representations of the feared animal, the quicker the fear reaction is extinguished during assessment?