

# Mentalization and daily affect of young people with MH difficulties

λογικά άσοβης νέων με προβλήματα συναίσθησης

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Social Science

# Outline

- Introduction
  - How do we understand Mental Health (MH) difficulties?
  - Why study mentalization (MZ) in young clinical population?
  - What is Experience Sampling Methodology (ESM)?
- Aims and Hypothesis
- Methodology
- Recap / Limitations



# Introduction

## How do we understand Mental Health (MH) disorders?

- Disorder-specific vs Dimensional Models
- Contextual factors + Psychological factors = Manifestation of Psychopathology
  - Dynamic!
- Transdiagnostic Framework for study complexity in MH not new.  
(Dalgeish et al., 2020, Fried and Robinaugh, 2020; McQuaid R., 2020 )



# Introduction

## However...

- The majority of studies use:
  - Cross-sectional methodology
  - Retrospective assessments
  - Lack of consistency across many psychological factors. Some examples:
    - Repetitive Negative Thinking vs Rumination
    - Emotional Regulation vs Inhibitory Control



# what can we do?



# 14.5 years

Average age of onset of MH difficulties  
(Solmi et al., 2021)



# 28.3%

increase of young people who started treatment at  
**Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Scotland**  
**(Public Health Scotland, 2020)**



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## What can we do?

- Longitudinal assessments
- Ecological assessments
- Strengthening psychological concepts for study complexity
- Continuous vs Discrete
- Predictors vs Outcomes



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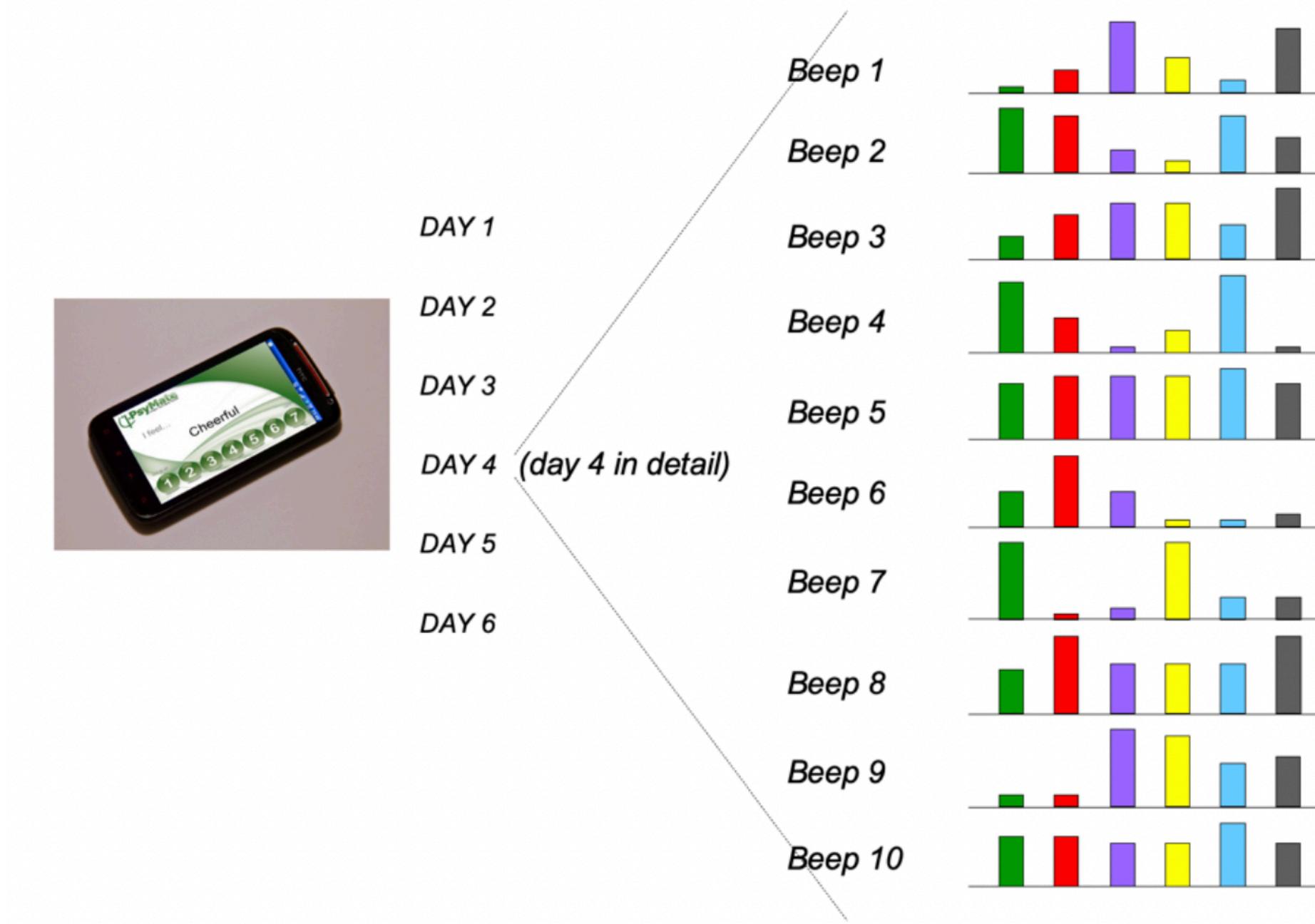
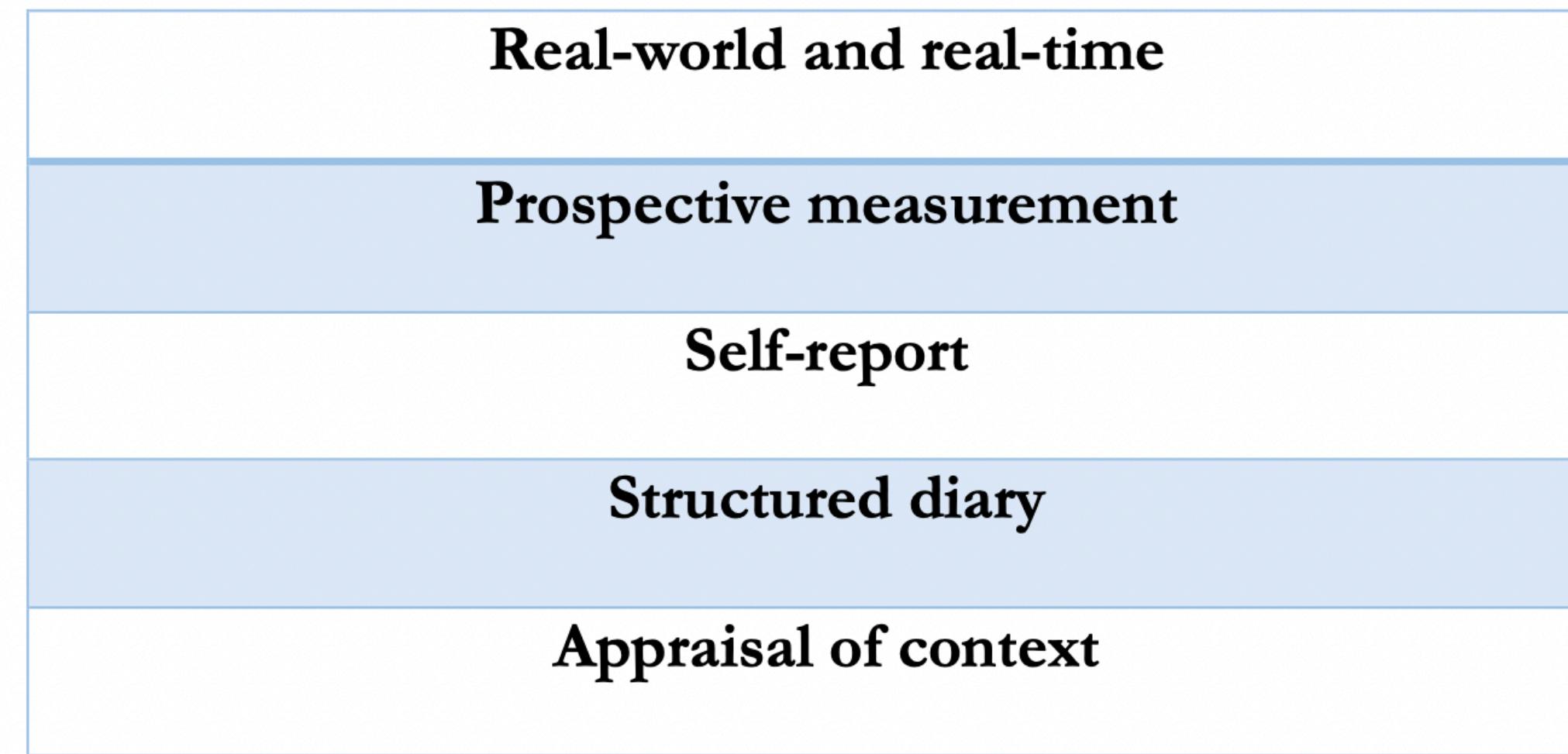
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# What is Experience Sampling Methodology?

## Micro-longitudinal assessment



Images



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# Transdiagnostic factors in mental health?

Transdiagnostic factors:

- Emotion Regulation
- Rumination
- Other and other stuff
- Mentalization / ToM
- Attachment
- Social Functioning
- Coping Strategies
- Compassion
- Executive Functions
- Other basic cognitive abilities
- Experiential Avoidance
- Self-esteem



# What is the relevant study of different outcomes?

Transdiagnostic factors:

- ***Emotion Regulation***
- Rumination
- Other and other stuff
- **Mentalization / ToM**
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# What is mentalization (MZ)?

- Understand others and oneself in terms of internal mental states
- Inherit Capacity , Externally Modulate , Transdiagnostic concept. Core References: (Fonagy and Bateman, 2017; Luyten et al, 2020).
- Promising results in interventions with Young People (Griffiths et al., 2019; Malda-Castillo et al., 2019; Weintraub et al., 2020)
- Fluctuations on MZ in BPD samples and nonclinical samples.
  - Stressors and context as modifiers



- What is available?
- MBT
  - MBT-A



# Aims and Hypothesis



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- Do MZ abilities vary longitudinally in clinical population regardless of the type of intervention (CBT, only pharmaceutical intervention, etc)?
- Do MZ abilities vary momentary in daily basis?
  - If this is true, does this variation predict emotion regulation of daily emotions?
  - If this is true, does this variation is contextually dependent?
- Does this variation predict change in symptomatology?



# Methodology



# Methodology

## Design

- Participants aged between 14 and 25 years-old (target N = 50) in use of mental health services in NHS Lothian will be recruited. (IMMERSE project)
- Multi-center longitudinal study using survey and ESM methods in three points in time.
  - Survey - longitudinal assessment in three points in time. (RFQ-Y, DERS, MANSA, PANAS)
  - ESM - interval contingent sampling
- Exclusion criteria will encompass services users with neurodevelopmental disorders.

## Analysis

- Multilevel Models (MLM)
  - Within and Between person variation (Survey and ESM)
  - Within and Between-day variation (ESM)
  - Lagged analysis (MZ today - ER tomorrow)
- Network Analysis



# Methodology

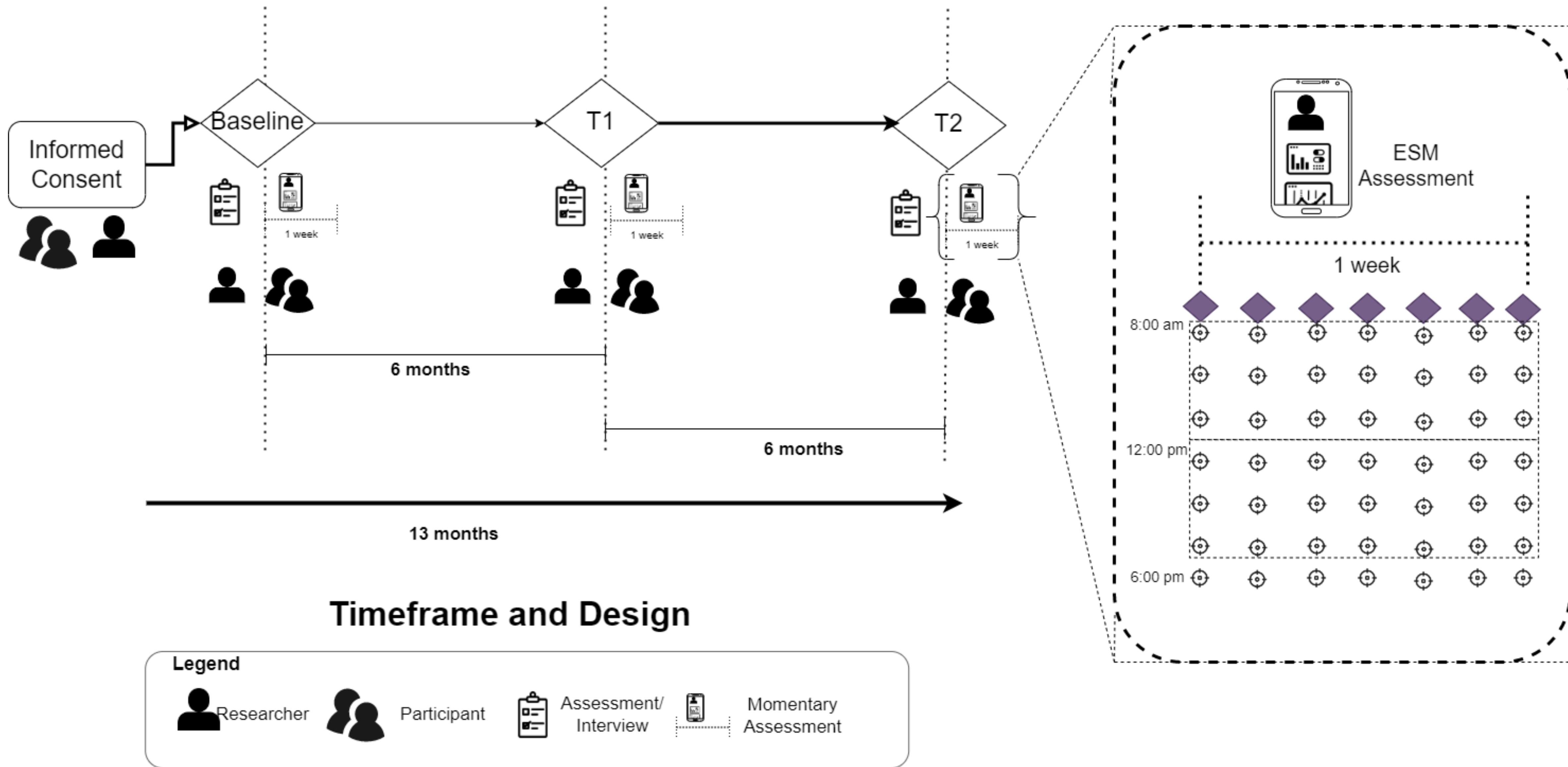
## Design

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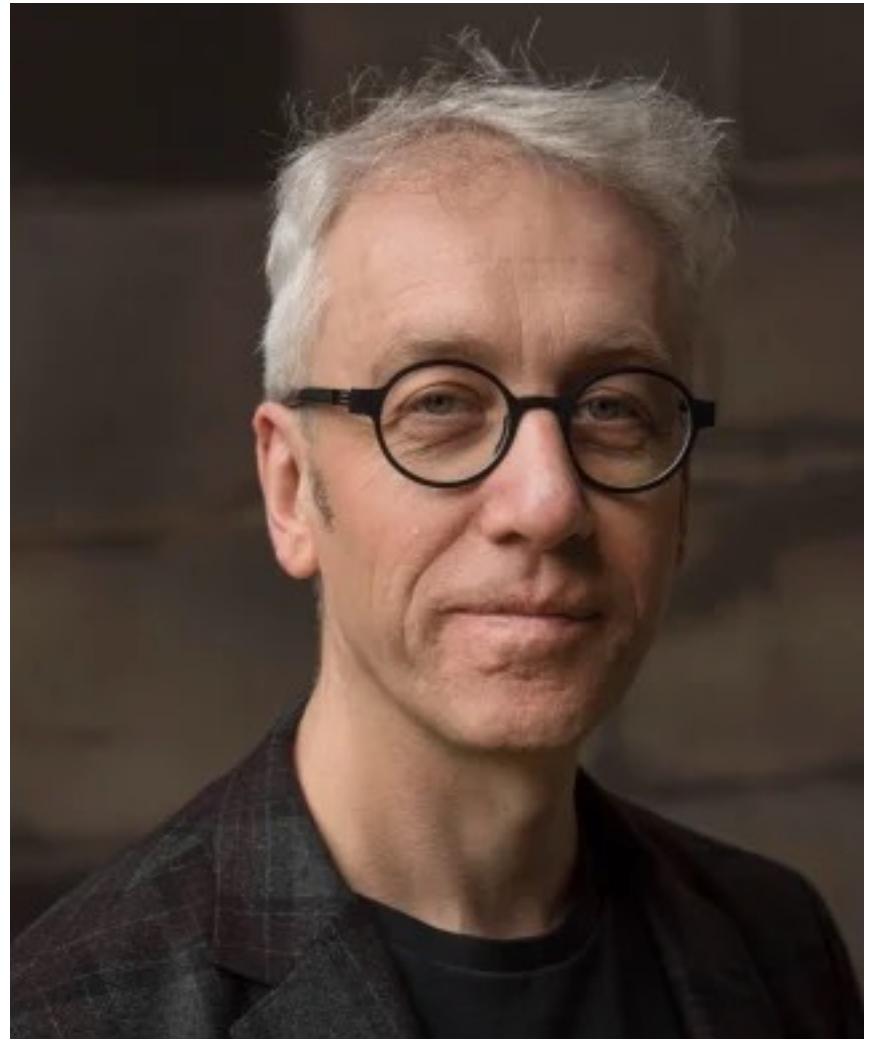
# Summary

- Transdiagnostic approaches for understanding dimensional MH
- Longitudinal and ecological methods as a good tools to approach
- Mentalization essential to navigate the complex social world, it captures the underrepresented interpersonal aspect of other concepts (e.g. ER)
- *Does MZ change? How much? Is this different across different contexts?*



# Thank you!

Some amazing people helping me to further develop my ideas:



Prof Matthias Schwannauer



Dr Simona Di Folco



IMMERSE Consortium (GA at Edinburgh)



**IMMERSE**

<https://immerse-project.eu/>

**CMH** group  
Contextual Mental Health  
Coming soon



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
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