

# Sussex Research

## Internet-delivered interpretation training reduces worry and anxiety in individuals with Generalized Anxiety Disorder: a randomized controlled experiment

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**Additional Supplementary Materials**

Hirsch, C. R., Krahé, C., Whyte, J., Krzyzanowski, H., Meeten, F., Norton, S., & Mathews, A. (in press). Internet-Delivered Interpretation Training Reduces Worry and Anxiety in Individuals with Generalized Anxiety Disorder: A Randomized Controlled Experiment. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*.

### **Additional information on assignment items**

Each CBM assignment included 20 items resolved positively and 20 others that the participant had to resolve themselves. For the 20 resolved by participants themselves, 10 were totally new items and 10 were repetitions of items presented in positive form earlier in the session, but this time presented in ambiguous form for participants to resolve themselves. Early sessions mainly included items that would be relatively easy to resolve in a positive manner, while later sessions included items that would potentially be more difficult to resolve positively, thus helping to scaffold the potential development of an even more positive interpretation bias in keeping with non-anxious individuals. The control condition had novel items presented in ambiguous form for each session.

### **Instructions for CBM participants to generate positive images and their own positive outcomes during each assignment**

Try to imagine yourself in the situation described as if it is happening to you.

Close your eyes while listening to each audio clip. To help you generate vivid mental images, you will have short time after each clip to imagine the outcome...

If you have not encountered a situation like this one described before, please do your best to imagine what it would be like to be in that situation if it happened to you.

You will hear two types of audio clip.

#### **1. Situations where the ending is provided**

In these clips, you will hear descriptions of everyday situations and how they turned out. Please listen to each audio clip carefully, and imagine yourself in the scenario, focusing particularly on how it turns out positively...

#### **2. Situations where you generate an ending**

These types of clips are very similar, but this time you won't hear how the situation turns out. Instead, your job is to generate an image of a positive way the situation could turn out, then hold this positive outcome in mind and continue vividly imagining it...

### **Routine contact between experimenter and participants**

Contacts were matched across conditions and consisted of a call before consent to confirm eligibility and describe the study (approximately 15 minutes), and a brief phone call after participants had completed their first assignment to check they understood what was required of them (approximately 5 minutes). Automated emails were sent to participants across T0-T3. Twelve emails in total were sent by the platform to notify participants when their account was activated, assessments were coming up or assessments were due. Additionally, two more automated emails were sent after participants had completed assignment 5 and assignment 7. For the CBM condition these emails asked participants to try to identify potential positive outcomes when they were thinking negatively in day-to-day life, and for the control condition these emails were to say thank you for completing the assignments thus far. Automated text messages were also sent to participants 3 times across the study encouraging participants to apply the techniques they were learning to day-to-day life (CBM condition) or to continue with their progress (CONTROL). Participants would also receive additional automated emails to prompt them if they fell behind with sessions (i.e., three sessions in a row were not completed in a given week), or if they had not completed an assessment. If an assessment was still not completed, then the participants were briefly contacted again by phone (approximately 2 minutes) to prompt them to do so. The number of calls was not recorded by the team. Calls were merely to prompt completion of tasks and were similar across conditions in both content and frequency of use; no tele-coaching was provided.

### **Rationale for CBM and CONTROL conditions**

This study is designed to help us understand why some people find it difficult to stop thinking repeatedly about negative topics. Most people worry from time to time, but usually this passes fairly quickly. However, some people find that once worry has started, it is very difficult to stop. People with generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD), who worry uncontrollably about lots of different topics, often describe worry as dominating their everyday thoughts, without being able to stop thinking this way. Research studies have shown that focusing on negative topics in this way is associated with higher levels of anxiety, and that higher levels of anxiety are in turn associated with greater focus on negative topics. However, we know very little about why or how some people are able to control negative thinking while others find it so difficult. In the present study, we hope to learn more about what can make negative thoughts so persistent and what people can do to prevent such thoughts getting out of control.