Lessons Learned: Providing Supportive Accountability to Individuals Enrolled in an Online Anxiety Intervention

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Background

- Technology-delivered interventions (TDIs) show promise for reducing mental health symptoms
- Attrition is a major challenge of TDIs (e.g., 86% of participants dropped out of a multi-session web-based CBM-I for anxiety study)
- Added human support (coaching) is one model that may increase engagement and retention in web-based interventions
- Coaching has not been evaluated for a digital intervention for individuals with high levels of self-reported anxiety

Hohensee et al., 2020

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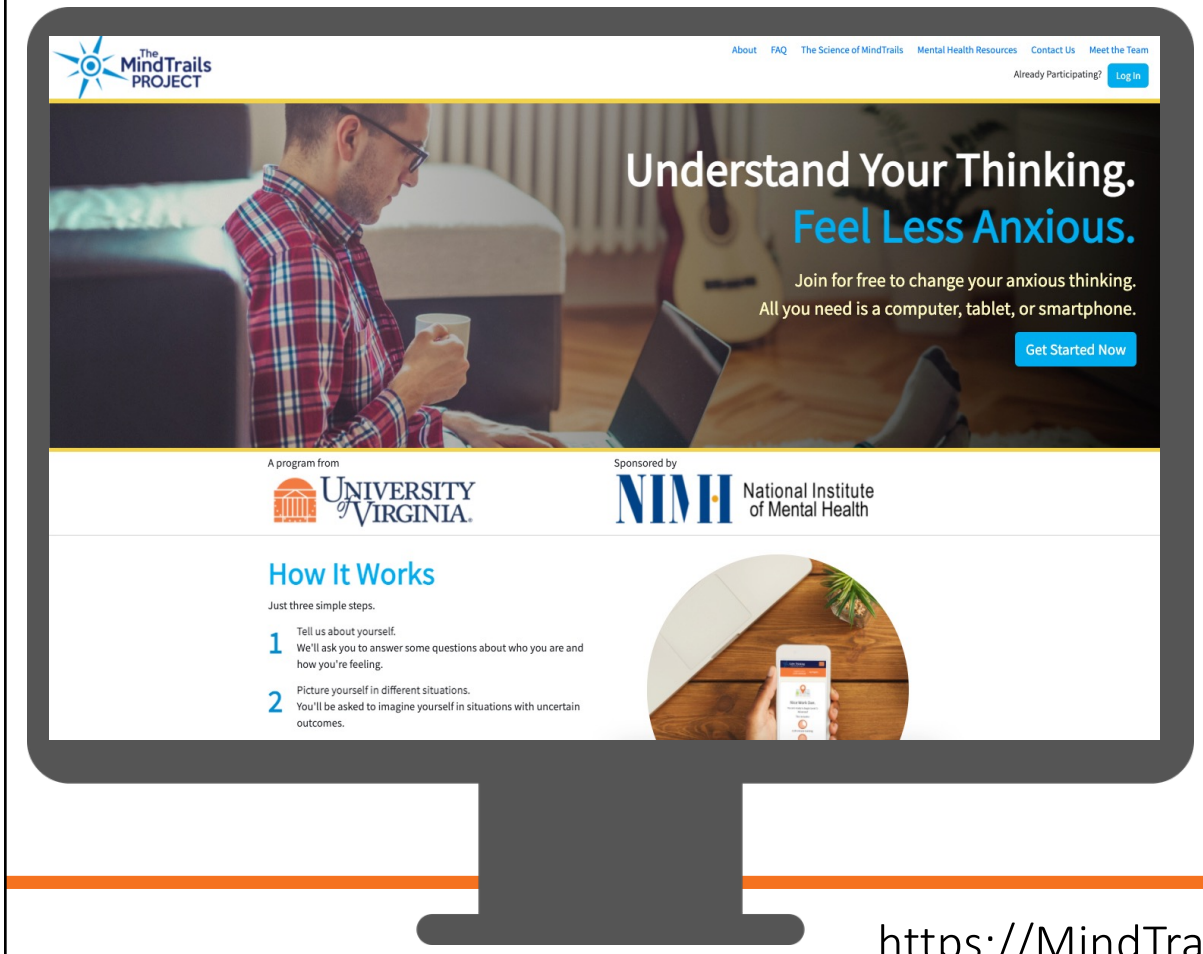

MindTrails CBM-I training reduces self-reported symptoms of anxiety

Ji et al., 2021

https://MindTrails.virginia.edu

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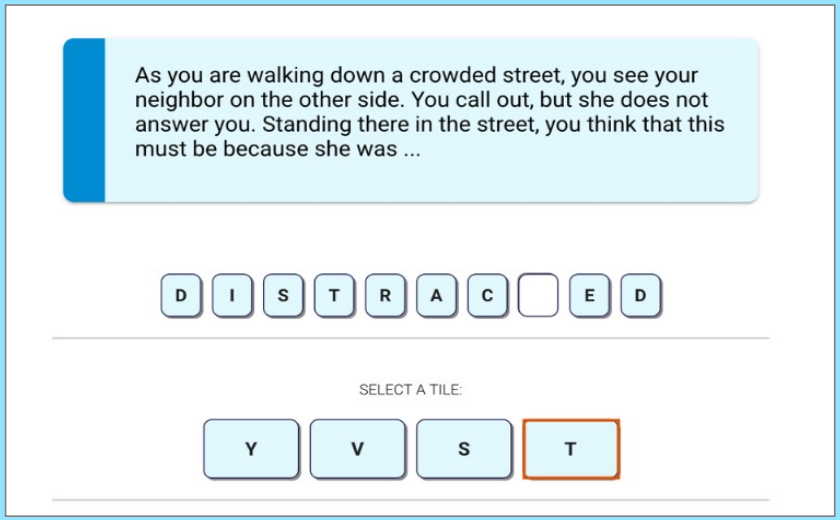
- One 15-minute CBM-I training per week
- 5 weeks
- 40 scenarios (image followed by scenario text)
- 90% resolved non-threatening positive or neutral



- Comprehension question to reinforce interpretation

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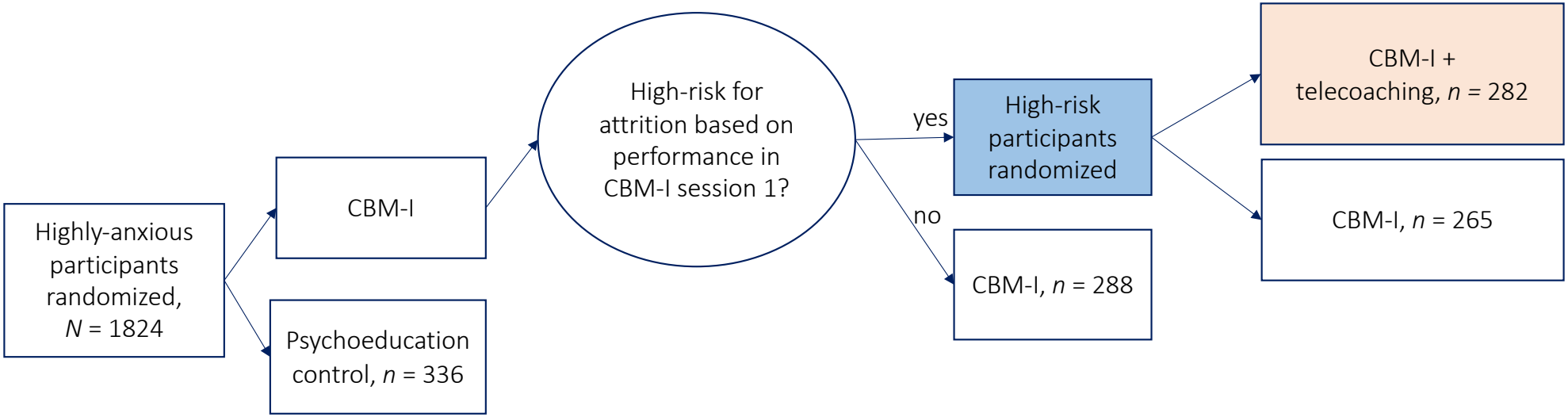
SMART Design – CBM-I for adults with symptoms of anxiety

January 2019 – April 2020



Eberle et al., in prep; Werntz et al., under review

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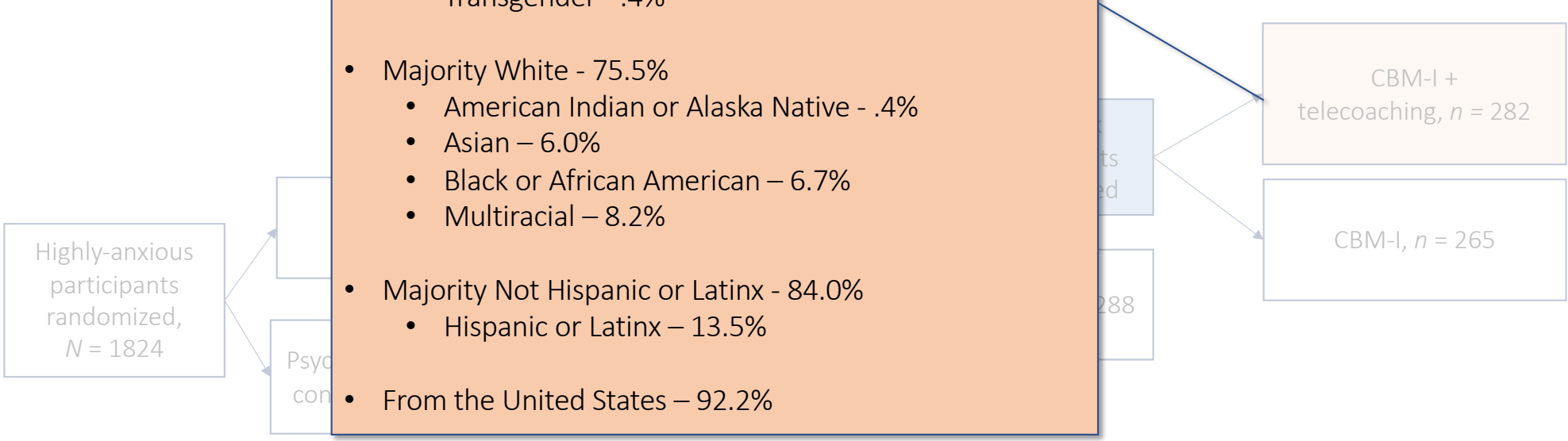
SMART Design – CBM-I fo… anxiety

January 2019 – April 2…

- Majority women – 81.9%
  - Men – 15.6%
  - Other gender - .7%
  - Transgender - .4%
- Majority White - 75.5%
  - American Indian or Alaska Native - .4%
  - Asian – 6.0%
  - Black or African American – 6.7%
  - Multiracial – 8.2%
- Majority Not Hispanic or Latinx - 84.0%
  - Hispanic or Latinx – 13.5%
- From the United States – 92.2%



Eberle et al., in prep; Werntz et al., under review

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Coaching

- Trained undergraduate research assistants
- 4 coaching sessions (1 per week after 1st training session)
  - First always a phone call
  - Following could be text or call based on pt's choice
- Supportive Accountability Model[1] and Efficiency Model[2] used to develop protocol
  - Coaches held participants accountable for completing weekly CBM-I training sessions
  - Coaches checked in on and documented TDI failure points[2] (e.g., usability, engagement)
- Coaches used dashboard (showing session completion) and coaching wiki (developed for this intervention) to guide conversations

Werntz et al., under review

[1]Mohr et al., 2011; [2]Schueller et al., 2017

MindTrails Coaching R01

Navigation

- **Home**
- ▼ **Background & Training**
  - 1. Dashboard
  - 2. Cognitive bias modification (CBM)
  - 3. Preparing to coach
  - 4. Contacting participants
  - 5. To do list for coaching
  - 6. International participants
  - 7. No response protocol
  - 8. Adherence protocol
- ▼ **Coaching Components**
  - Engagement Issues
  - Implementation Issues
  - Technical Troubleshooting
  - Usability and Knowledge Issues
- ▼ **Coaching Sessions**
  - **1. Initial session (1)**
  - 2. Follow-up convos (2 & 3)
  - 3. Final convo (4)
  - 4. Worsening symptoms or suicidality
  - Communication misc
  - Pt didn't answer text
  - Pt didn't pick up call
- **Unplanned Contact**

Coaching Sessions >

1. Initial session (1)

Contents

Text in a blue background is what you should say during a call if the first session is a phone call.
Text in a pink background is what you should send via text message if the first session is a messaging session.
updated 10/24/20

Key points to cover at the start of the call

Introduce yourself and the call
Hello, this is [YOUR NAME] from the MindTrails program. Is this [PARTICIPANT'S NAME]?

Great! I hope that you're doing well.

Available for download!

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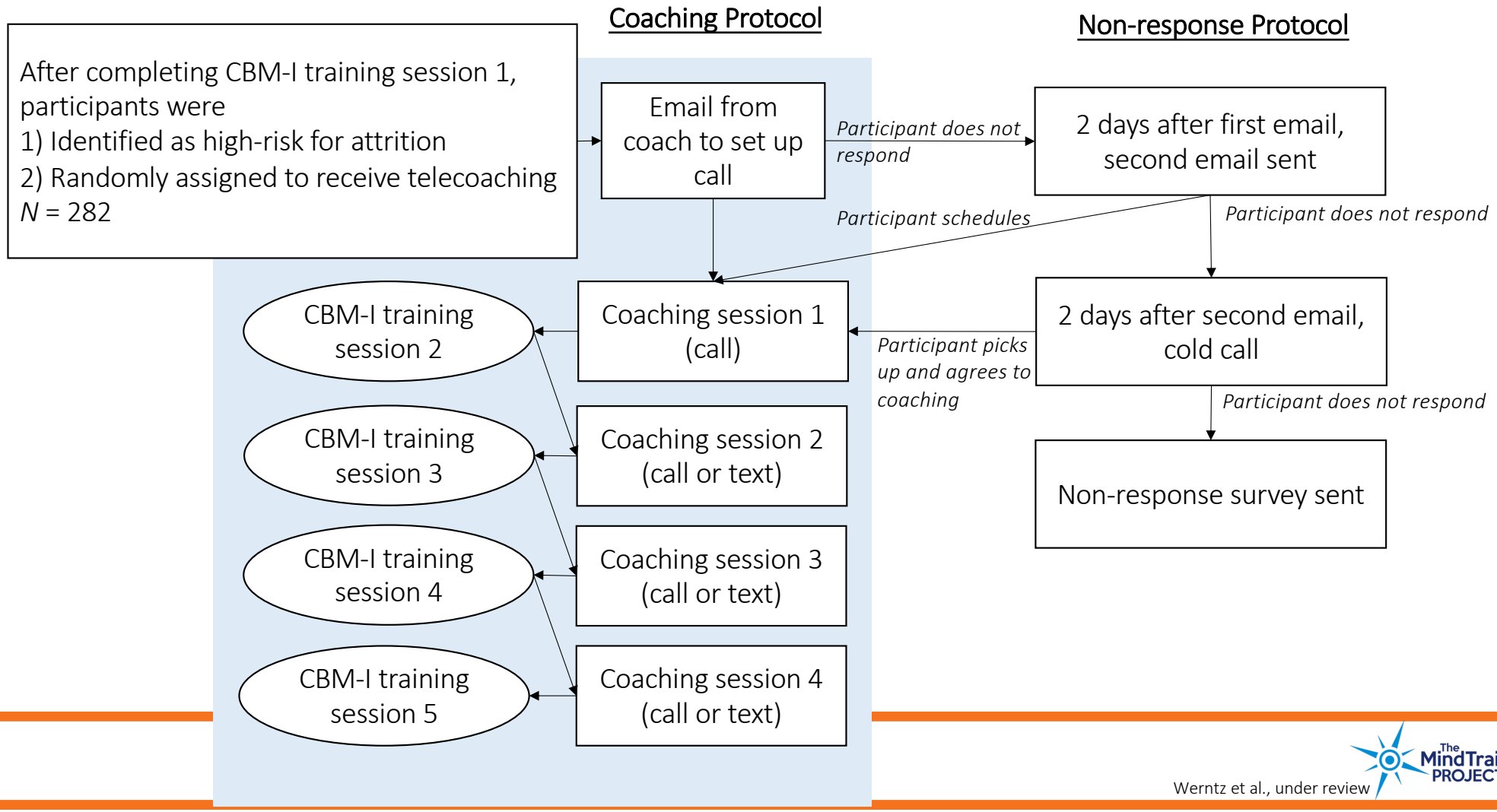
Werntz et al., under review



Werntz et al., under review

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Current study

Within the intervention + coaching condition,

- Engagement in coaching
- Content of interactions
- Reasons for not engaging
- Engagement in coaching related to individual characteristics
  - Age, gender, education hypotheses preregistered: https://osf.io/fmucx/

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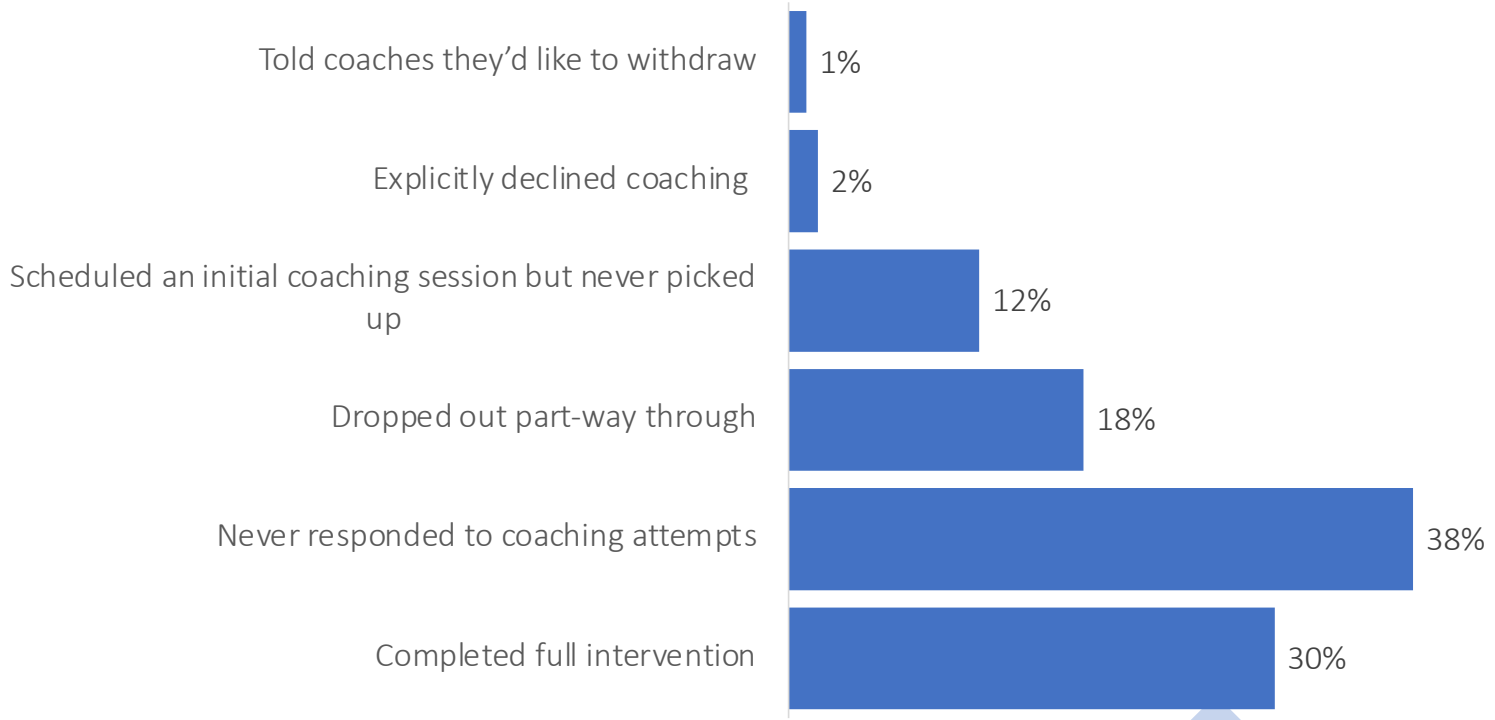
Engagement in coaching (*N* = 282)

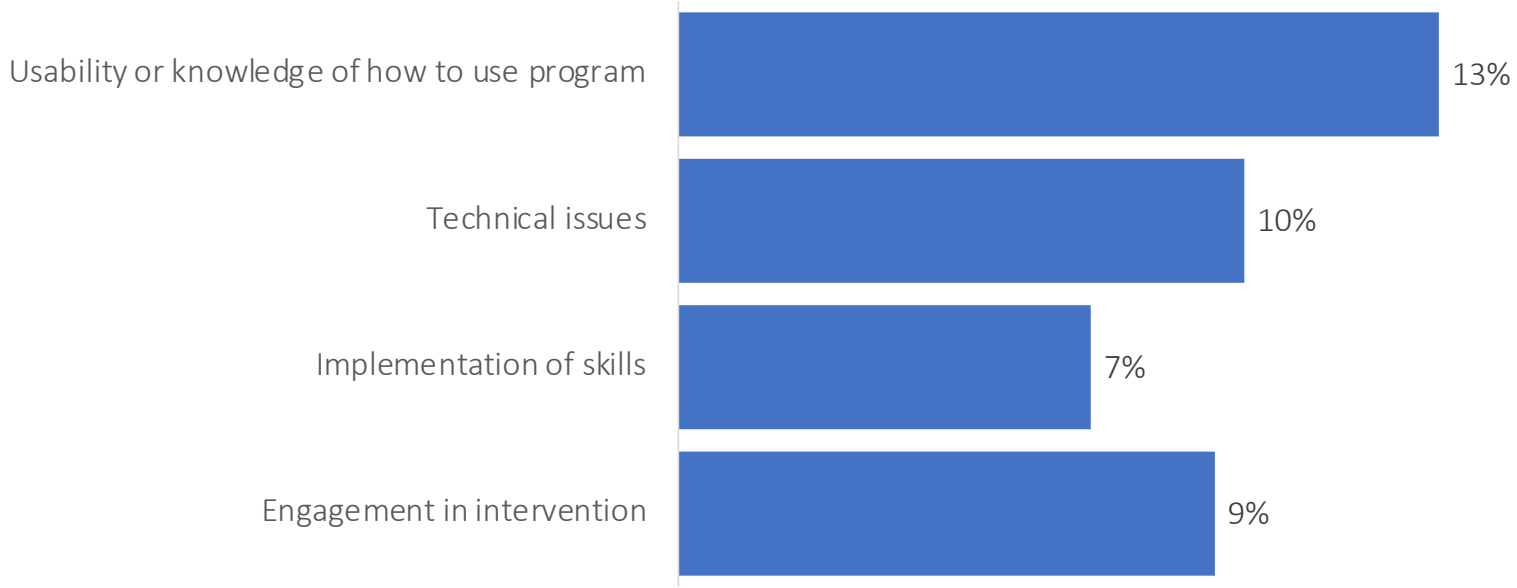


Werntz et al., under review

Content of interactions (417 sessions)

Based on the Efficiency Model's (Schueller et al., 2017) Failure Points

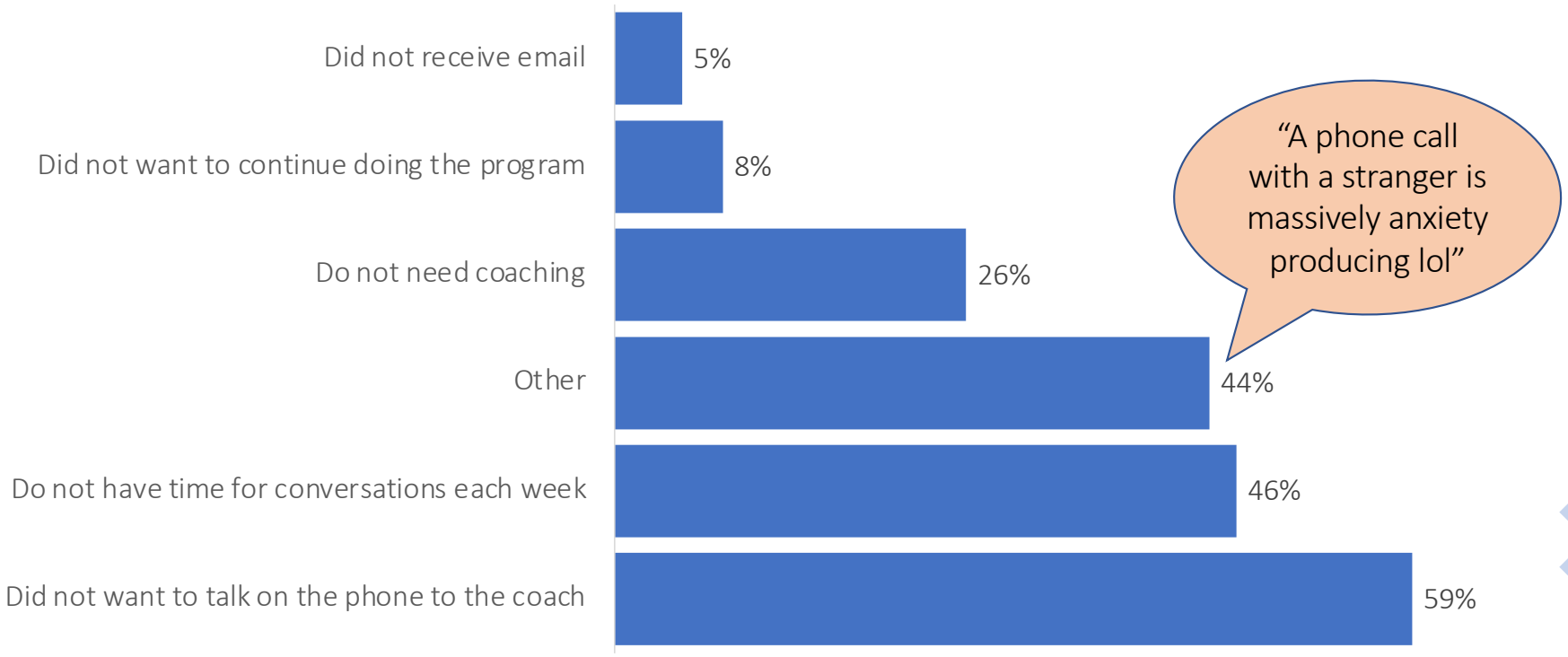
>60% of sessions did not include a discussion of the failure points



Werntz et al., under review

Reasons for not responding

(*n* = 111 emailed survey)



Werntz et al., under review

Individual Differences & Engagement

- Self-rated importance of reducing anxiety symptoms, age, and gender: not related to engagement

- More **education:**
  - more likely to respond to the coaching email
  - more likely to complete coaching
- Greater **baseline anxiety symptom severity** (OASIS; Norman et al., 2006):
  - not associated with initial response to email
  - lower likelihood of completing coaching

Werntz et al., under review

Lessons

- Anxiety cited as reason some didn't engage in coaching
- Efficiency Model guided how we assessed issues raised during call, but no way of assessing supportive accountability (broader trial results will give us an idea)
- Coaching is not a one-size-fits-all approach
  - Give pts the choice

- Pts didn't raise questions about staying engaged in training or implementing CBM-I skills in daily life, suggesting –
  - coaches were not provided with enough training/skills to have those conversations,
  - participants were not interested in talking to strangers,
  - these aren't issues our participants faced in the current CBM-I trial

- User-centered design approach to enhancing engagement strategies, coaching is one tool to help individuals interested in using CBM-I for anxiety symptoms

Werntz et al., under review

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Thank you!

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