



South London and Maudsley **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Psychosis Clinical Academic Group (CAG)

**Institute of
Psychiatry**

at The Maudsley

KING'S
College
LONDON
Founded 1829

University of London

ACT for distressed voice hearers: a multi-baseline study

Preliminary Results

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Background

- Two RCTs demonstrate efficacy of brief ACT for psychosis (Bach & Hayes, 2002; Gaudiano & Herbert, 2006)
- There is also support for longer ACTp, up to 10 sessions (White et al., submitted)
- Voice hearers' who use **more acceptance and mindfulness** report:
 - less distress,
 - voices seen as less powerful,
 - **A greater sense of autonomy** with their actions(Shawyer et al, 2007, Morris et al., submitted)

Study Question

Can the processes of change theorised to underpin ACT for psychosis be:

- 1) measured in a small-N study, *and*
- 2) relate to outcome with voice hearers distressed/ disabled by auditory hallucinations?

Study Design

$N = 4 \text{ (x2)}$

A

B

Start
Baseline

End
Baseline

Mid
Therapy

End
Therapy

**R
A
N
D
O
M**

1 – 4
Baseline
Sessions
(Engagement)

5 Sessions
ACT

5 Sessions
ACT

Participants

5 males, 3 females; aged 27 – 54.

- 4 White British, 4 Black/Minority Ethnic
- All unemployed: 3 in voluntary work

Mental Health

- Distressed/ disabled by voices > 1 year
 - Length of time hearing voices 2 – 17 years.
- **Diagnoses:** 7 SCZ-spectrum, 1 Depression with psychotic features
 - stable medication and community mental health care
 - On waiting lists for CBT



Intervention

ACT Intervention

We developed a 10 session ACT for Voices manual (mindfulness + valued action).

Adherence to ACT

- Audio-recordings of sessions were rated by an ACT expert for adherence (timeliness, presence of ACT therapist behaviours; no proscribed behaviours, ie. Verbal Challenging, cog restructuring)
- 1/7 of all sessions rated: 100% adherent.

Study Measures

Distress

Beck Depression Inventory

Beck Anxiety Inventory

Symptoms

Psychotic Symptoms Rating
Scale – Auditory Hallucinations

Acceptance

Voices Acceptance & Action Scale

Acceptance without Judgement
(KIMS)

Quality of Life

Manchester Short Assessment
of Quality of Life
(MANSA)

Social Functioning

Social Functioning Scale

IRAP

Session ratings:

Voices Conviction
Preoccupation

Frequency
Autonomy

Distress
Willingness

IRAP Development

- **Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure** – measures specific implicit relations with a target concept
- In this study: **Acceptance/ Non-Acceptance in the context of Voices**
- Coping Words (rated by ACT therapists)
 - Accept, Allow, Let Be
 - Block Out, Suppress, Resist

Voices / **Close Friend**

Resist

**Let Be
Accept
Allow**

**Block Out
Suppress**

Press 'd' for

Disagree

Press 'k' for

Agree



Data Analysis

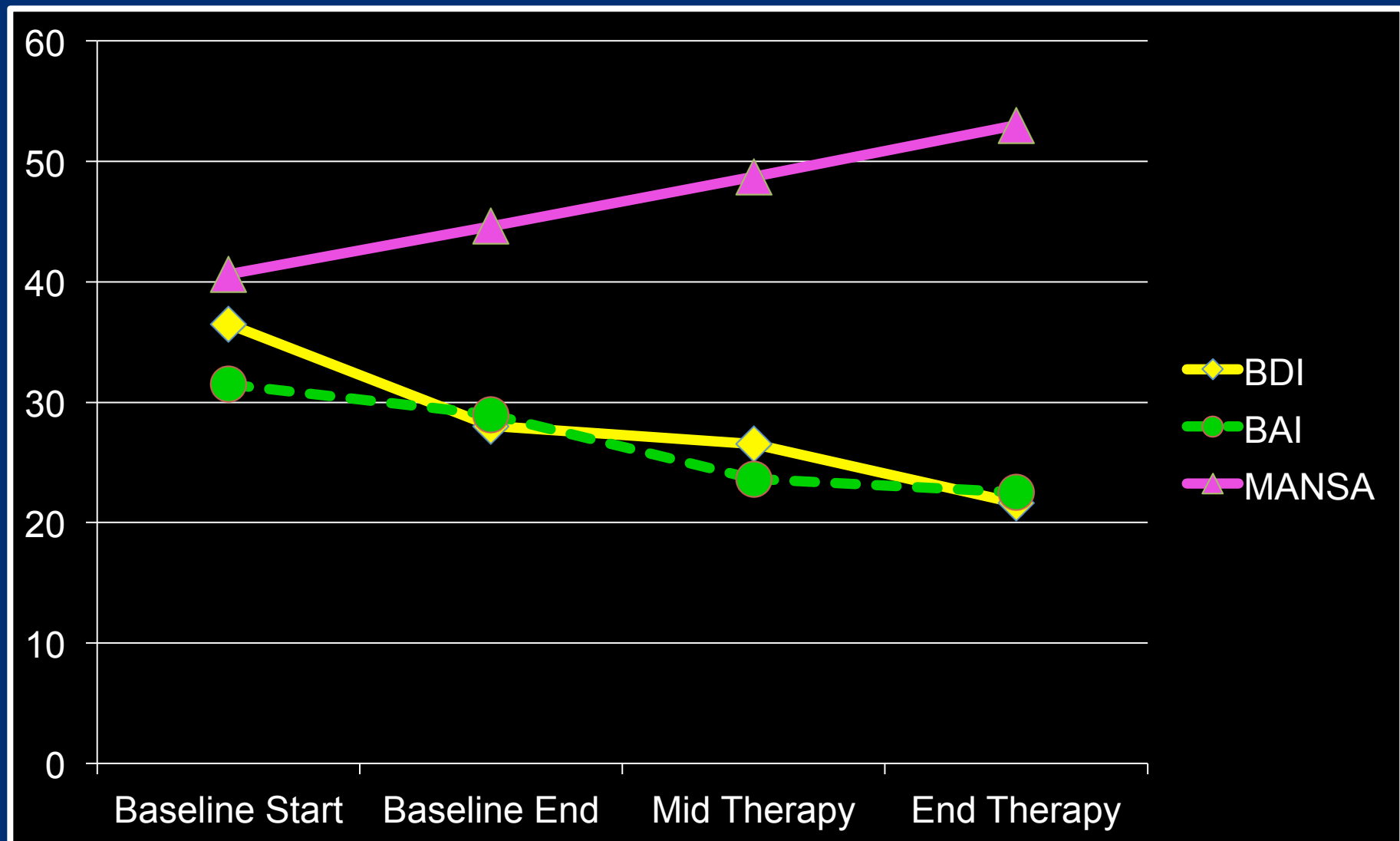
Data Analysis Strategy

- Reliable Change Index (RCI)
- Visual Analysis
- IRAP Mean Difference

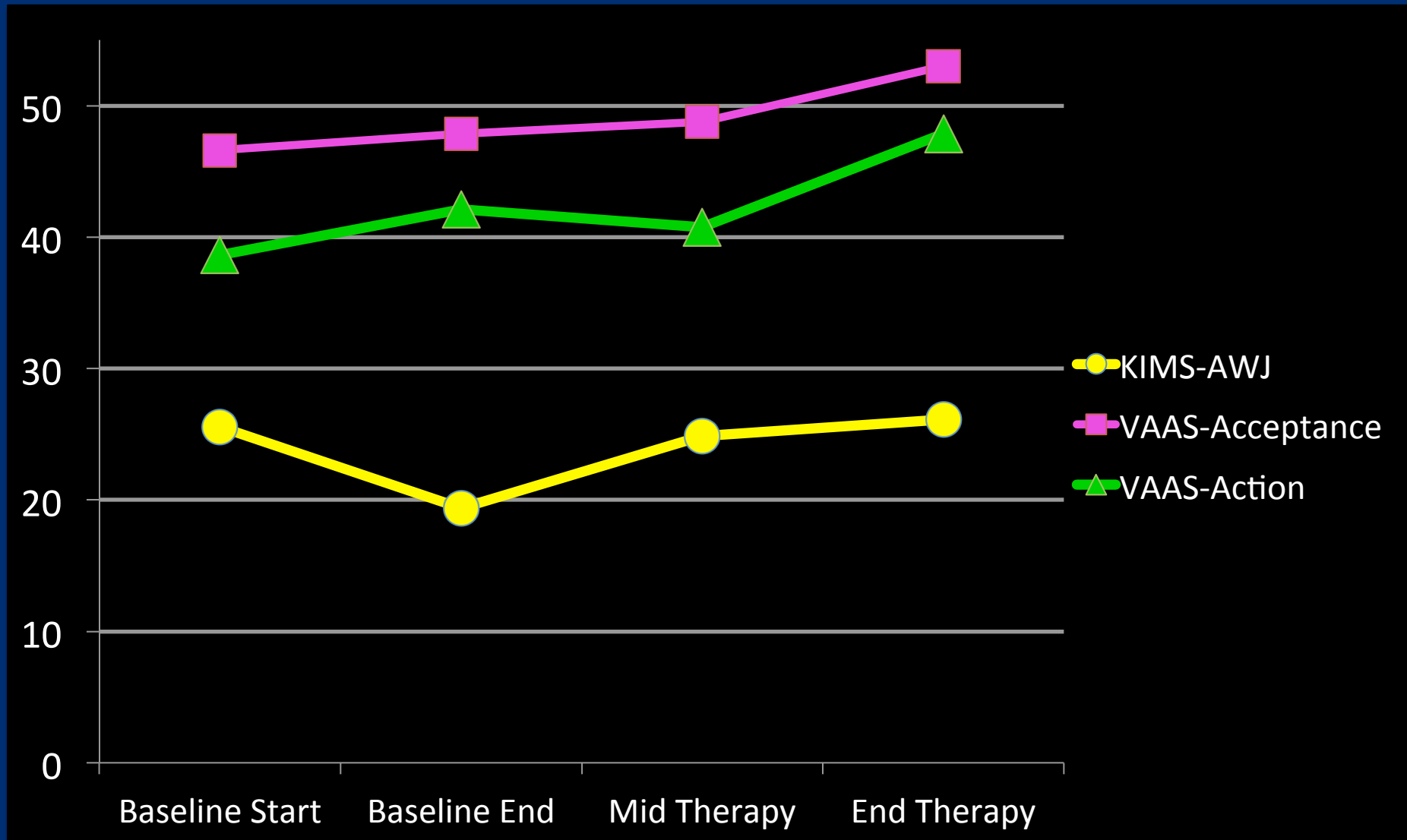
End Baseline to End Therapy (RCI; $p < .05$)

Participant	Depression	Anxiety	Quality of Life	Acceptance w/o Judgement	Voices Acceptance	Voices Action
#1	-	-	-	-	-	-
#2	-	⊗	-	-	-	-
#3	-	-	-	-	-	-
#4	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
Group 2						
#5	-	✓	-	-	-	-
#6	-	-	-	-	-	-
#7	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
#8	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓
	1 improved	3 improved 1 worsened	3 improved	3 improved	1 improved	3 improved

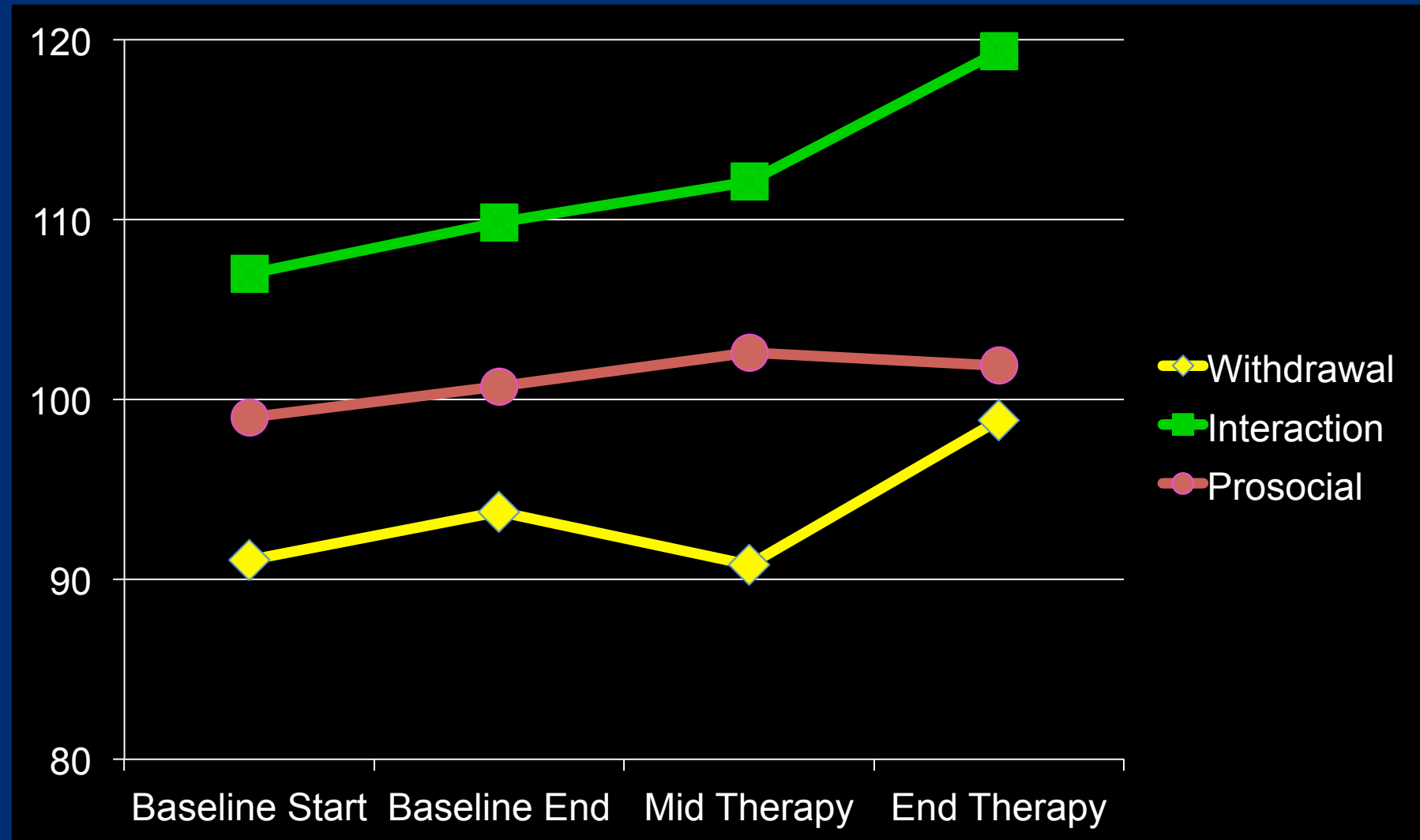
Depression, Anxiety, QoL Across Phases (N=8)



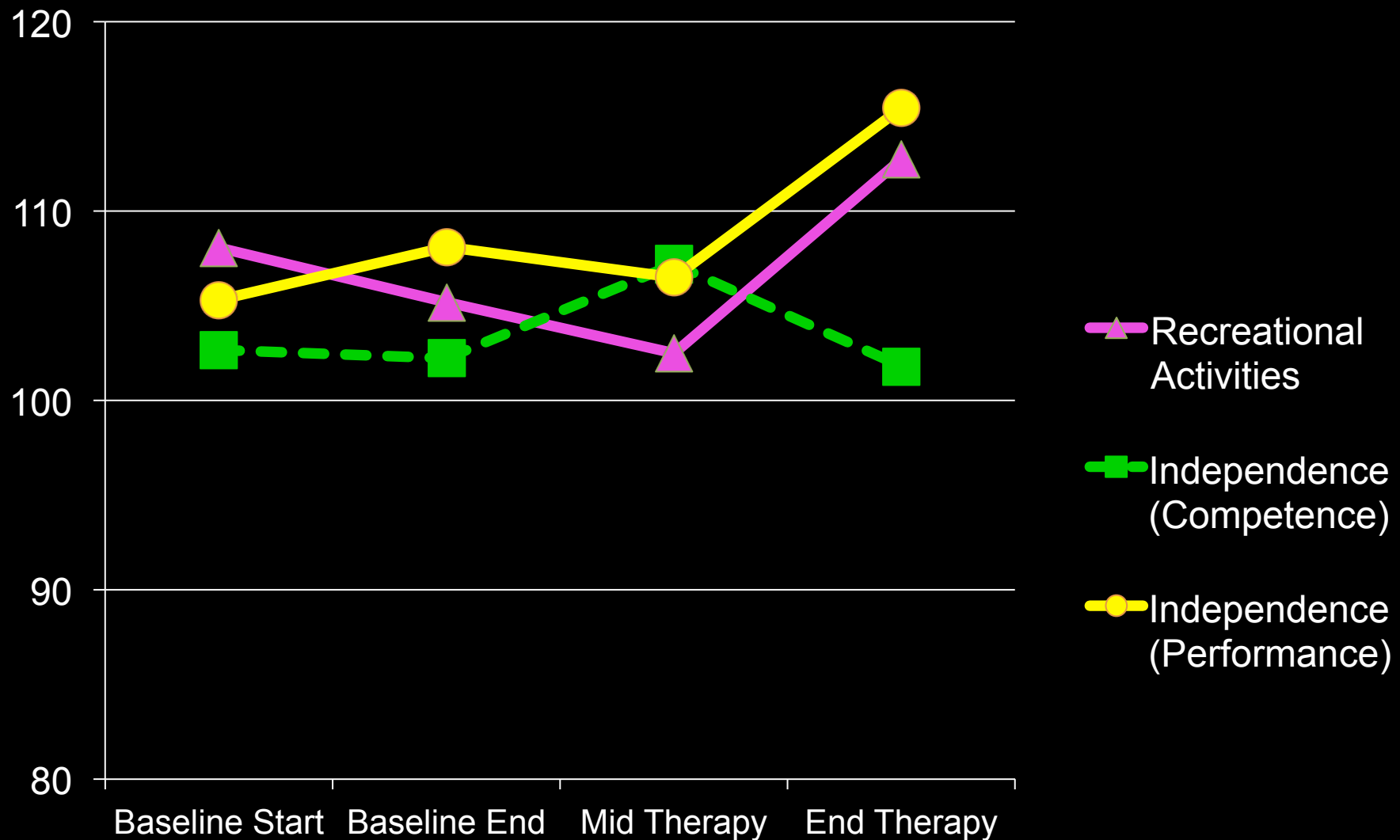
Acceptance across Phases (N = 8)



Social Functioning 1 (N=8)



Social Functioning 2 (N=8)



IRAP

Calculations

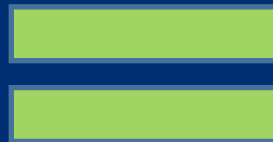
MEAN
Non-Acceptance
Relations

(Consistent
Trials)



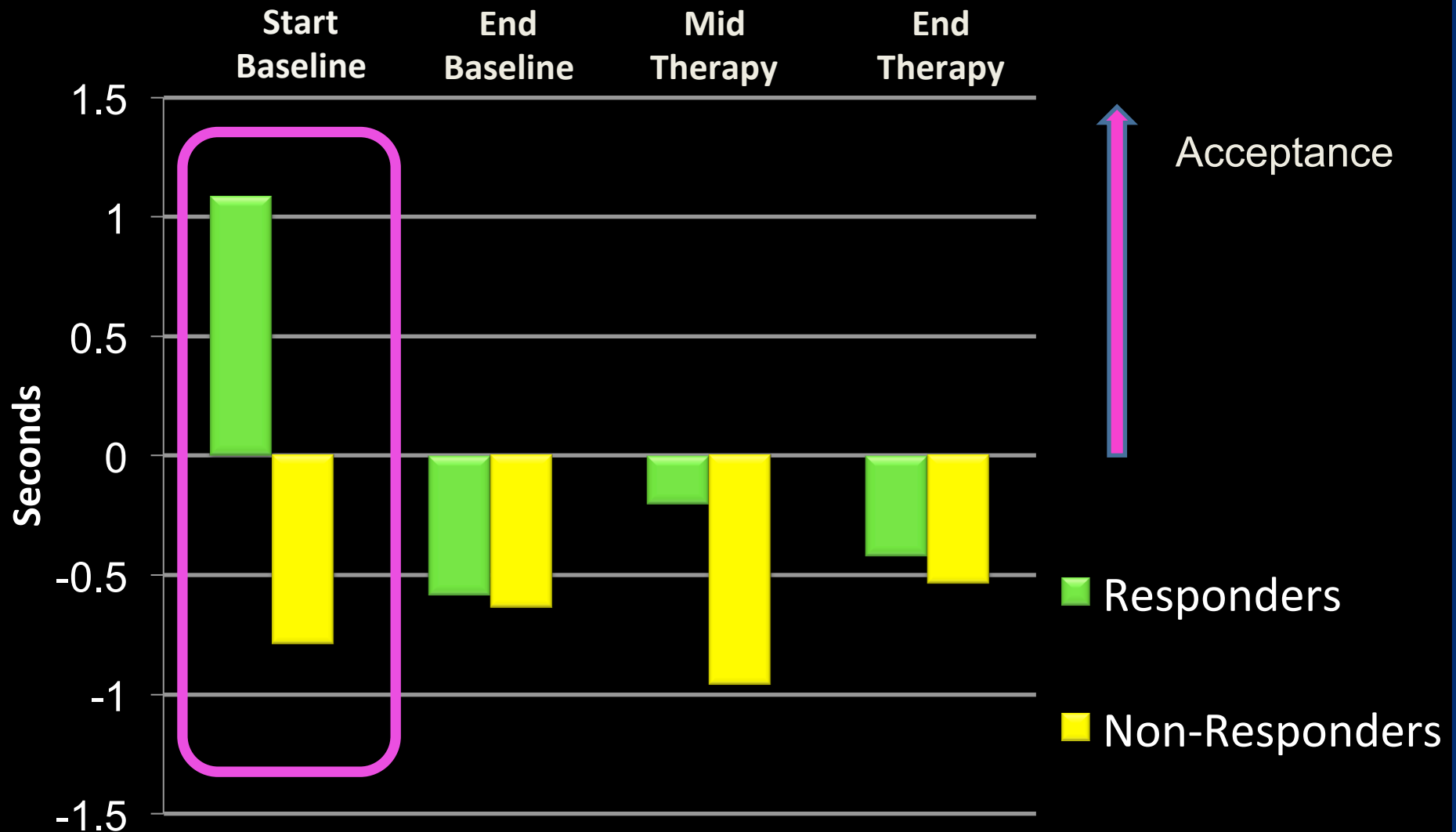
MEAN
Acceptance
Relations

(Inconsistent
Trials)



Mean
Difference
(Direction)

Mean Difference of IRAP times



“Untargeted Gains”

- Participant decided to go to an awards ceremony (#1)
- Participant decided to walk past a petrol station, on the way to the clinic, to exercise openness to his experiences (trauma cue) (#2)
- Participant engaged back in competitive chess and political activism, after long break following onset of illness. (#5)
- Participant choose to take long bus journey to get to relative's birthday party, in the face of paranoid thoughts and voices. (#6)

Implications/ Future Research

This small-N study provides support for ACT as an intervention for distressed voice hearers

Changes in distress, quality of life, and functioning, with concomitant changes in acceptance of voices, non-judgemental awareness

The IRAP may have predictive potential in identifying those who may benefit from ACT (highly speculative)

There will be advantages to using the Mixed Trial -IRAP to investigate this in future studies.

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