

# Targeting interventions to address core emotional vulnerability related to disconnection and rejection, and cognitive themes of insufficient self-control are likely most relevant for this population.

## Early Maladaptive Schemas and Schema Modes in an Australian Public Drug & Alcohol Population

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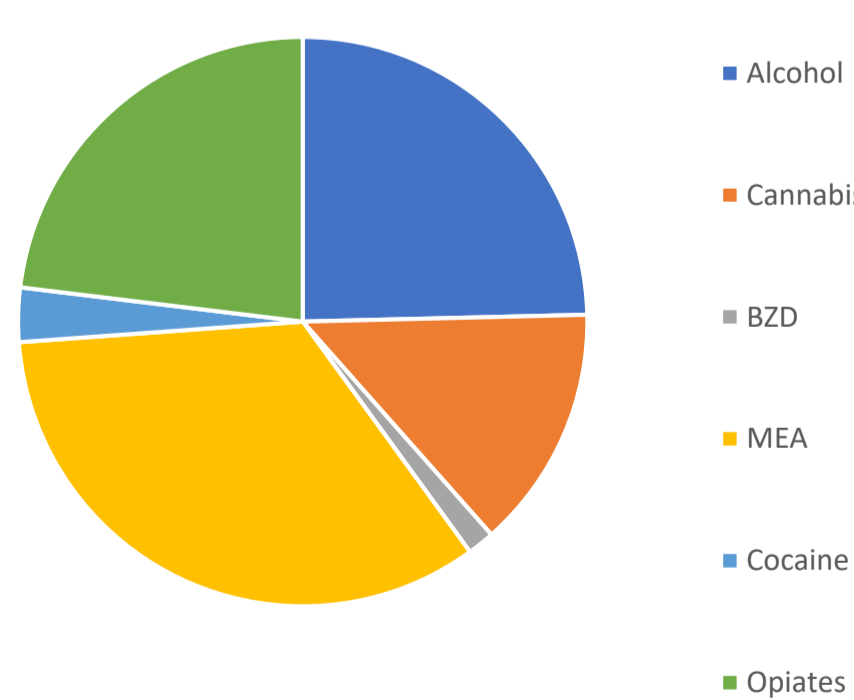
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### INTRO

- Schema Therapy (ST)<sub>1</sub> targets maladaptive patterns in thinking, feeling, and behaving (Early Maladaptive Schemas; EMS), and the acute reactions triggered by these patterns (Schema Modes; SM).
- Previous research has indicated that EMS and SM are useful constructs in conceptualising substance-use problems.<sub>2</sub>
- Substance Use Disorder patients demonstrate high rates of childhood neglect and abuse, which are strong predictors of elevated EMS and SM profiles.

### METHODS

- Participants were 65 patients (45 males, Mean age = 40.4 years (*SD* = 9.97) receiving Schema Therapy during substance use treatment.



- young Schema Questionnaire – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (*n* = 26). Schema Mode Inventory – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (*n* = 46).<sub>3,4</sub>
- Mean scores on EMS and SM are compared to normative data from previous SUD focused studies.

### RESULTS

- Preliminary data demonstrate high levels of emotional vulnerability associated with disconnection/rejection schemas, and insufficient self-control schemas, in consistent patterns to other samples.<sub>5</sub>

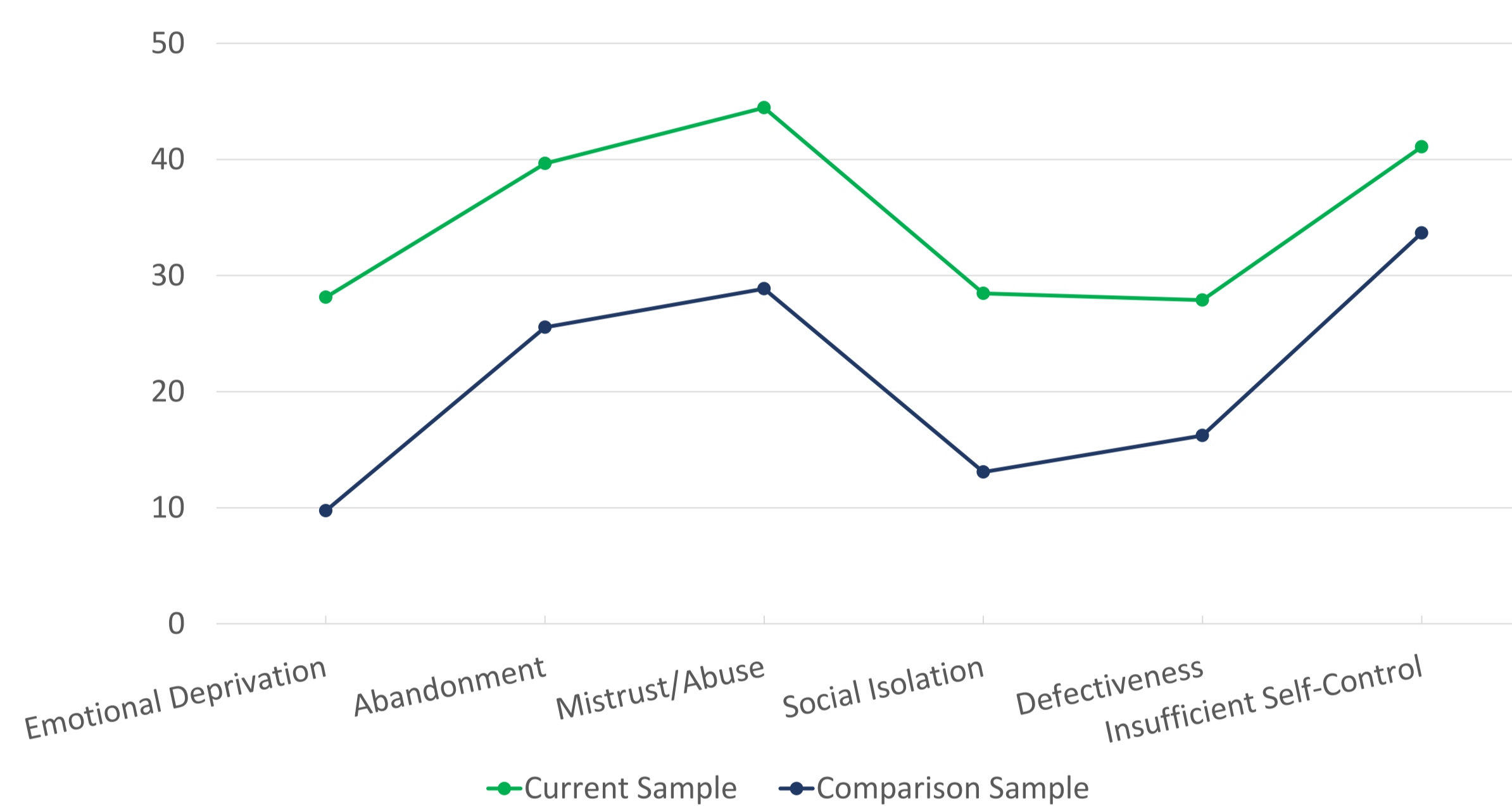


Figure 1. Comparison of mean EMS scores compared to comparison sample of substance use patients from Shorey et al (2013).

- SM profiles typically exceeded those of patients with confirmed personality disorder diagnoses.<sub>6</sub>

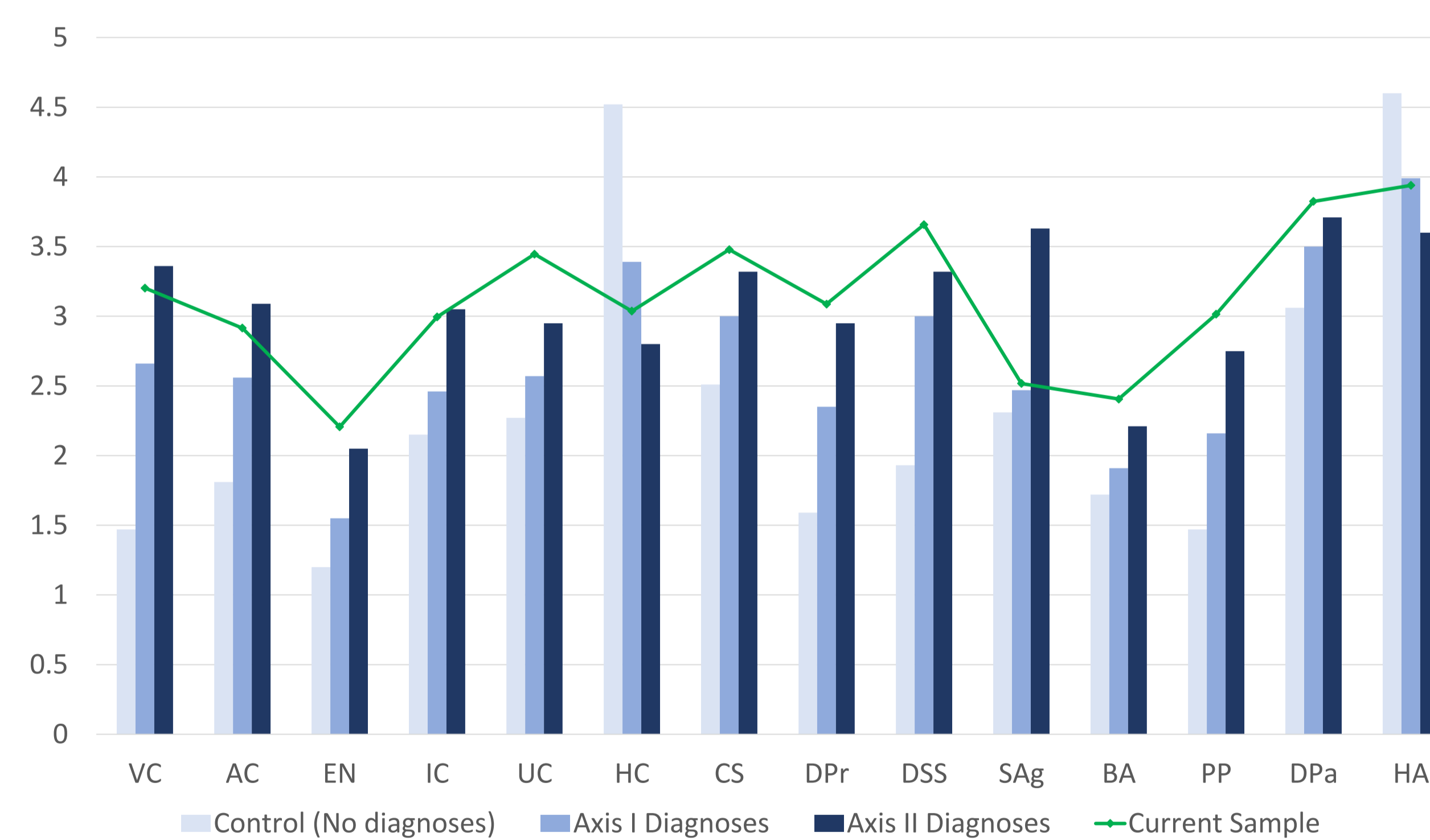
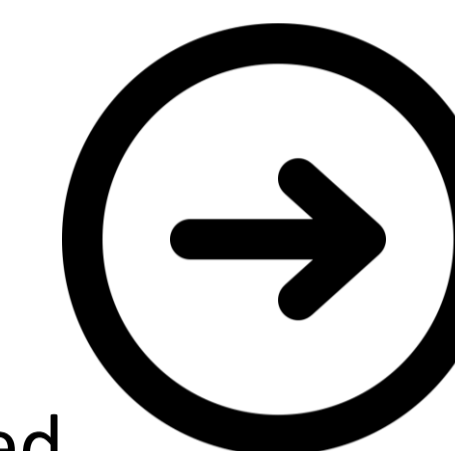


Figure 2. Comparison of mean schema mode responses to normative data from Lobbetael et al (2010).

### DISCUSSION

- The schema therapy framework provides a useful means of contextualising substance use behaviour.
- SUD patients are likely to benefit from interventions which target EMS and SM.
- The final results of this project will inform the design of a group schema therapy program.



### Next Steps

### A Pilot Trial of Group Schema Therapy for Substance Use Disorders and Comorbid Mental Health Problems

- Group Schema Therapy incorporates traditional cognitive-behavioural interventions with emotion and experiential focused interventions.<sub>7</sub>
- This model of intervention has traditionally been long-term (20-30 sessions) but has had some initial positive results in briefer models.<sub>8</sub>
- The interventions focus on participants developing an understanding of their repetitive patterns of reacting and responding to EMS, in particular in addressing maladaptive coping behaviours.

### Why Group Schema Therapy for This Population?

- ✓ Evidence based in complex mental health issues including personality disorders, trauma related disorders.<sub>9,10</sub>
- ✓ Proven efficacy in public health settings.<sub>11</sub>
- ✓ Adaptable and proven efficacy for group settings.<sub>12</sub>
- ✓ Transdiagnostic

#### References

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