

# Autobiographical memory and the self in social phobia

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The goal of the present study is to investigate whether the relation between AM, the self, and psychopathology can also be found in other disorders than PTSD; and in social phobia specifically. The SMS theory (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000)...

<b>Ethical review</b>	Approved WMO
<b>Status</b>	Recruitment stopped
<b>Health condition type</b>	Anxiety disorders and symptoms
<b>Study type</b>	Observational non invasive

## Summary

### ID

NL-OMON35901

### Source

ToetsingOnline

### Brief title

SocialSelf

### Condition

- Anxiety disorders and symptoms

### Synonym

social anxiety, Social phobia

### Research involving

Human

### Sponsors and support

**Primary sponsor:** ProPersona (Nijmegen)

**Source(s) of monetary or material Support:** Ministerie van OC&W

## Intervention

**Keyword:** Anxiety, Autobiographical memory, Identity, Social phobia

## Outcome measures

### Primary outcome

The primary study parameters are operationalisations of the self (self-image and goals) and AM:

- self-images ("I am" paradigm)
- selfdiscrepancy (actual-ideal and actual-ought self)
- active goals
- self-defining memories
- AM retrieval bias (AMT cueing task)

### Secondary outcome

The secondary study parameters are other concepts that may be related to social phobia:

- traumatic experiences in childhood
- explicit self-esteem
- implicit self-esteem

Additional control measures of psychopathology in the three groups are included:

- depressive symptoms
- social phobia symptoms
- PTSD symptoms

# Study description

## Background summary

Throughout life people have many experiences that are encoded at different levels of abstraction in AM. Our self-images and goals are defined from this knowledge. According to the Self-Memory-System theory (SMS; Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000), the self, consisting of self-images and the goals of an individual, is based on autobiographical memory (AM). Conversely, the self guides the allocation of attention and the encoding of information in memory in line with our goals. The self also guides the retrieval of memories that are relevant to our goal-directed behaviour. In short, there is an interaction between the self and AM which guides the encoding as well as retrieval of memories. In this study it is investigated to what extent social phobic individuals experience this disorder as self-defining. That is, to what extent the disorder is a part of the self.

Sutherland and Bryant (2005) showed that the relation between AM and the self plays a role in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Participants were a group with PTSD, a group that was exposed to a traumatic experience but did not have PTSD, and a healthy control group without traumatic experiences. Participants were asked to retrieve five memories of events that defined who they are today. The PTSD group retrieved more negative memories than the control groups and fewer positive memories than the healthy control group. The PTSD group also retrieved more trauma-related memories than the group with traumatic experience but without PTSD. Participants were also asked about their current goals. The number of trauma-related goals was positively related to the number of trauma-related memories retrieved by the participant. In a second study (2008), the researchers showed that a PTSD group reported more trauma-related memories in response to both positive and negative cue words than a group with traumatic experience but without PTSD. The PTSD group also had a larger discrepancy between the way they viewed their current self and how they would like to be. This self-discrepancy was positively correlated with the number of trauma-related memories that were retrieved in response to positive cue words. These studies support a relation between AM, the self and PTSD.

## Study objective

The goal of the present study is to investigate whether the relation between AM, the self, and psychopathology can also be found in other disorders than PTSD; and in social phobia specifically. The SMS theory (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000) does not suggest that the relation between these concepts is specific for PTSD. However, other disorders have not been investigated in this light. The present study investigates the question whether the relation between AM, the self and psychopathology is specific for PTSD or if this relation is also present in another disorder (social phobia).

## Study design

The study has a quasi-experimental design.

## Study burden and risks

The completion of the questionnaires and measures will take around 60 minutes per participant. This estimation is based on a pilot study at the Radboud University that included mostly the same measures within a healthy student population (this study took around 45 minutes per participant). The study is on location (ProPersona Overwaal) and participants have to travel there for participation. If possible, the testing session is scheduled before or after a therapeutic session in order to avoid extra travel time for patient participants. In our view there are no risks involved in participation.

## Contacts

### Public

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6663 CB Lent  
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### Scientific

ProPersona (Nijmegen)

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NL

## Trial sites

### Listed location countries

Netherlands

## Eligibility criteria

### Age

Adults (18-64 years)

Elderly (65 years and older)

## Inclusion criteria

Primary diagnosis of social phobia or PTSD or no psychological disorder.

## Exclusion criteria

Current psychotic episode, substance abuse, and inability to speak Dutch fluently.

## Study design

### Design

**Study type:** Observational non invasive

Masking: Open (masking not used)

Control: Uncontrolled

Primary purpose: Diagnostic

### Recruitment

NL

Recruitment status: Recruitment stopped

Start date (anticipated): 28-11-2011

Enrollment: 63

Type: Actual

## Ethics review

Approved WMO

Date: 18-08-2011

Application type: First submission

Review commission: CMO regio Arnhem-Nijmegen (Nijmegen)

## Study registrations

### Followed up by the following (possibly more current) registration

No registrations found.

### Other (possibly less up-to-date) registrations in this register

No registrations found.

### In other registers

Register	ID
CCMO	NL35819.091.11

## Study results

Date completed:	26-11-2013
Actual enrolment:	63