

Negative Beliefs About Worry Outperform Other Beliefs Associated with Generalized Anxiety Disorder

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Generalized anxiety disorder is characterized by chronic and excessive worry over a variety of daily life events



Negative beliefs about worry

Belief that worry is uncontrollable and dangerous



Intolerance of uncertainty

Negative feelings toward uncertain situations



Negative beliefs about worry is a strong predictor of pathological worry and GAD symptoms

(Khawaja & McMahon, 2011; Penney et al., 2013; Tan et al., 2010; Thielsch et al., 2015; Wells & Carter, 1999)



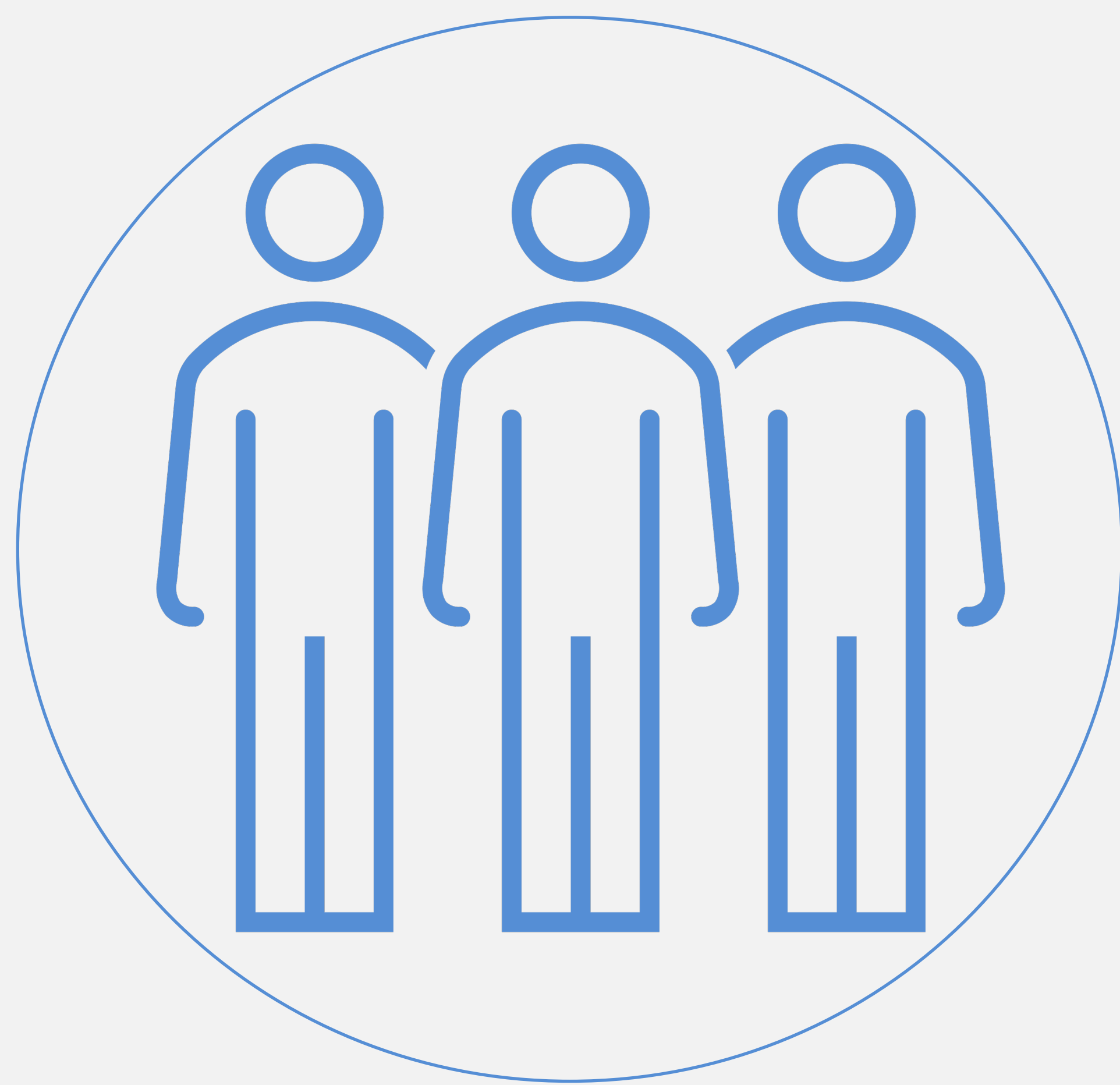
Intolerance of uncertainty is a predictor of worry severity and GAD symptoms

(Buhr & Dugas, 2006; Dugas et al., 2005, 2007; Ladouceur et al., 1999; Tan et al., 2010)



RESEARCH QUESTION: Which dysfunctional beliefs are uniquely associated with worry severity and GAD, above and beyond negative affect?

HYPOTHESIS: Negative beliefs about worry will be the strongest predictor of worry severity and GAD symptoms after controlling for negative affect



- $N = 348$
- MacEwan University undergraduate psychology students
- Participants pre-screened for high worry
- Mean age 20.5 years; 84% female



- Survey completed online via Qualtrics



Self-report measures:

- Penn State Worry Questionnaire (PSWQ)
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder – 7 Item Scale (GAD-7)
- Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)
- Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale – 12 (IUS-12)
- Metacognitions Questionnaire – 30 (MCQ-30)
 - Negative beliefs about worry (NBW) subscale
- Affective Control Scale (ACS)
 - Subscales: Anger; Anxiety; Depression; Positive Affect
- Cognitive Avoidance Questionnaire (CAQ)
- Negative Problem Orientation Questionnaire (NPOQ)

Pearson *r* Correlations

- All dysfunctional beliefs, as well as negative affect, correlated with both worry and GAD severity

Variable	PSWQ	GAD-7
PANAS NA	.44**	.53**
PANAS PA	.02	.22
IUS-12	.62**	.56**
MCQ-30 NBW	.70**	.61**
ACS Anger	.19**	.19**
ACS Positive Affect	.29**	.24**
ACS Depression	.51**	.44**
ACS Anxiety	.67**	.49**
CAQ	.46**	.43**
NPOQ	.65**	.50**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Predictors of Worry Severity

- Intolerance of uncertainty
- Negative beliefs about worry
- Fear of anxiety
- Negative problem orientation

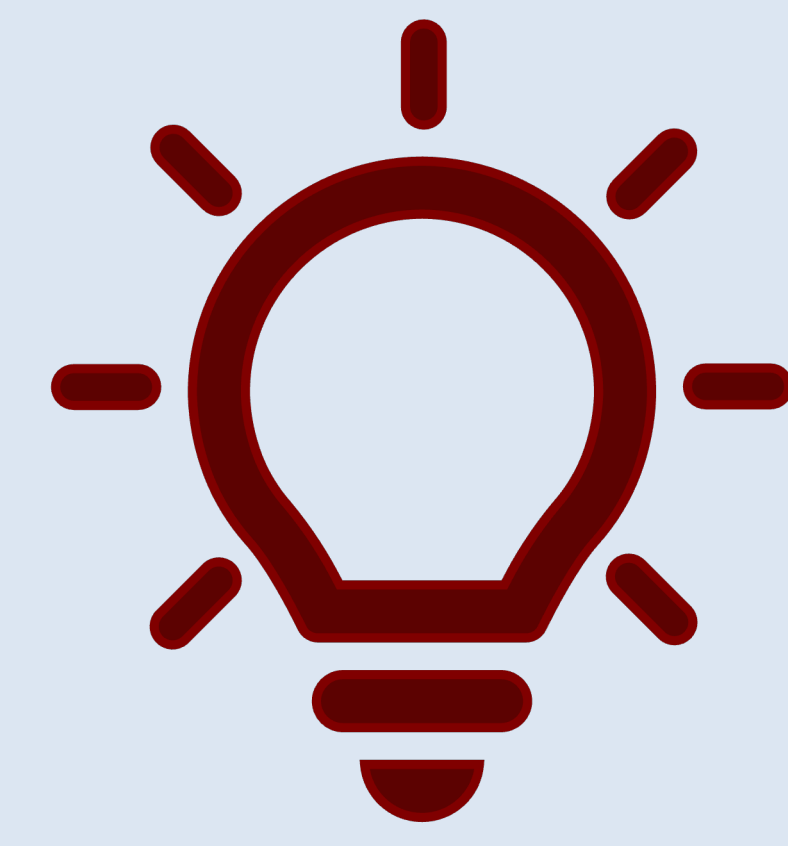
Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>R</i> ² <i>Change</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>pr</i>
DV: PSWQ					
Step 1	.44	.19	.19		
PANAS NA				7.85*	.44*
PANAS PA				-2.93*	-.18*
Step 2	.79	.62	.43		
PANAS NA				-.35	-.02
PANAS PA				1.07	.07
IUS-12				2.42*	.15*
MCQ-30 NBW				5.68***	.34***
ACS Anger				-.74	-.05
ACS Anxiety				2.52*	.16*
ACS Depression				1.95	.12
ACS Positive Affect				.32	.02
CAQ				.15	.01
NPOQ				3.75***	.23***

Predictors of GAD Symptoms

- Negative affect
- Positive affect
- Negative beliefs about worry
- Cognitive avoidance

Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>R</i> ² <i>Change</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>pr</i>
DV: GAD-7					
Step 1	.54	.29	.29		
PANAS NA				10.36***	.54****
PANAS PA				-4.48***	-.27***
Step 2	.68	.46	.17		
PANAS NA				4.35***	.26***
PANAS PA				-2.12*	-.13*
IUS-12				1.87	.12
MCQ-30 NBW				3.69***	.23***
ACS Anger				.36	.02
ACS Anxiety				-.45	-.03
ACS Depression				1.65	.10
ACS Positive Affect				-.61	-.04
CAQ				2.16*	.13*
NPOQ				.58	.04

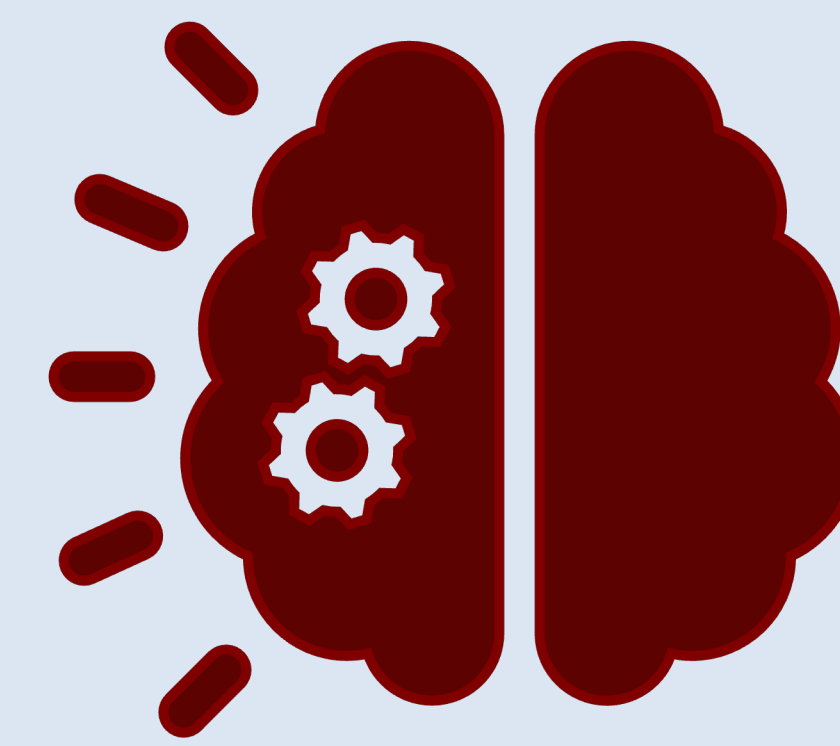
Negative beliefs about worry was the strongest predictor of both
worry severity and **GAD symptoms**



Negative beliefs about worry is the strongest predictor of GAD and worry severity



Results were found in high worriers supporting findings from prior clinical and non-clinical studies



Negative beliefs about worry should be a primary focus of GAD research



Negative beliefs about worry should be a primary target of GAD treatment