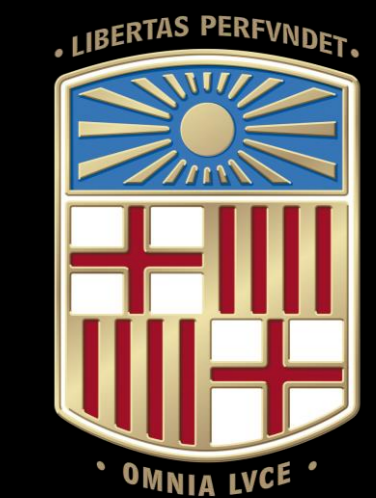


# PERSONALITY AND DISCOMFORT IN A THERAPEUTIC SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM USING EXPERIENTIAL METHODOLOGY

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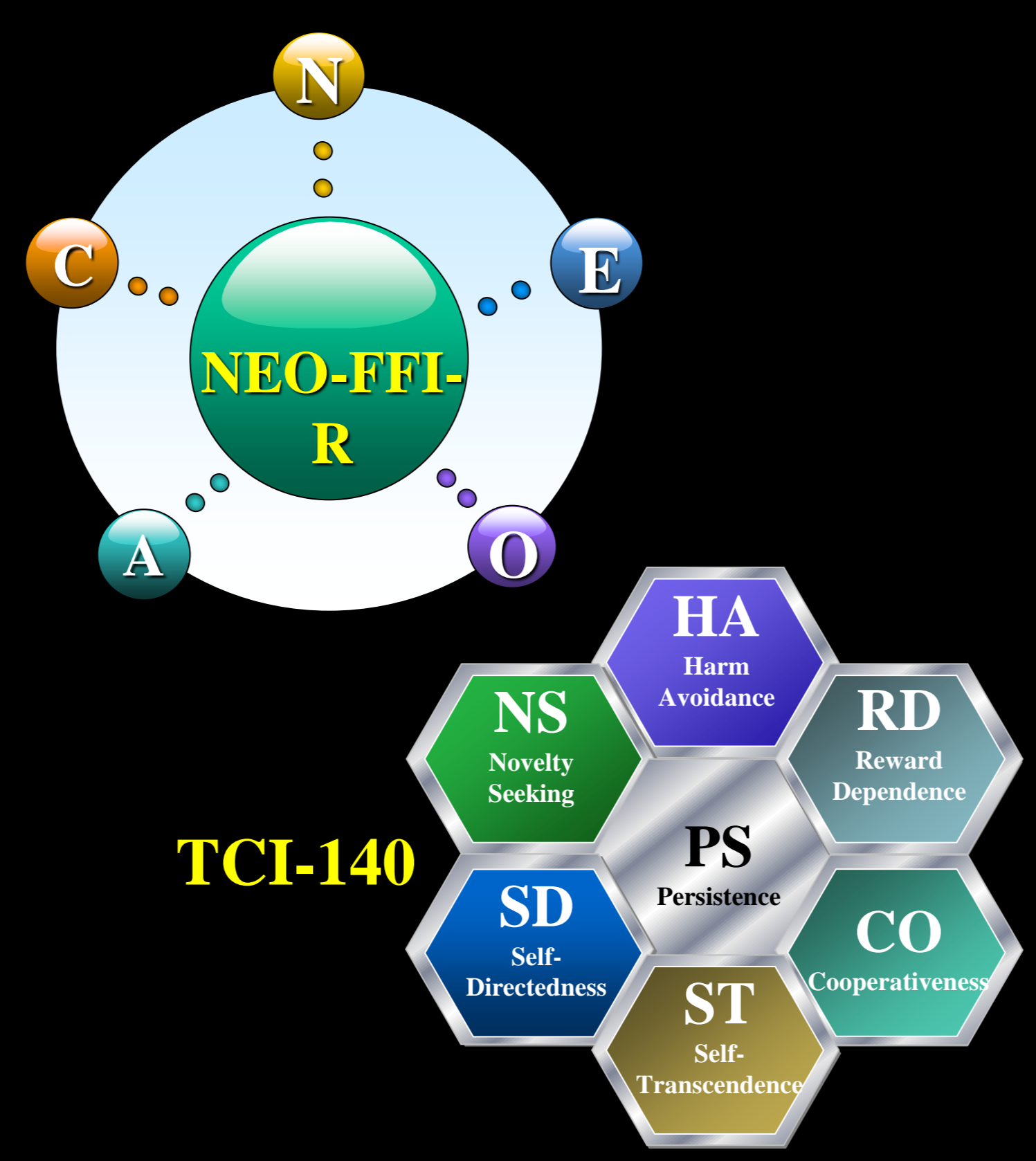
## OBJECTIVE

One of the most useful methodologies for training therapeutic skills in the clinical and health field involves the use of experiential learning in the *Role-Playing* or *Peer-Counselling* modalities (Bennet-Levy 2006; Fusté et al., 2016; Ruiz et al., 2018). However, one of the drawbacks that this methodology can entail is the apparent discomfort of having to explain personal experiences. Different studies have suggested that the variations in the levels of distress experienced in the training programs can be associated with both aspects related to the training program, as well as personality factors. That is why the objective of this work is to analyze the relationship between the personality profile and the degree of discomfort manifested by psychologists in training when sharing personal experiences in a training environment.

## METHOD

### Participants

A total of 313 postgraduate psychologists (79.5% women; mean age 25.1, SD= 4.5) who have taken the subject "Therapeutic Skills" of a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology training program at the University of Barcelona (2012-2017).



All participants completed the *Five-Factor Personality Inventory* (NEO-FFI-R) and 156 completed, also, the short version of revised Cloninger's *Temperament and Character Inventory* (TCI-140). The degree of anticipated discomfort was assessed at the beginning of the training program by answering the question "To what degree do you feel uncomfortable explaining personal aspects to people you know –not close friends–?", while the discomfort manifested in relation to the application of the *Peer counselling* was assessed at the end of the program by answering the question "To what extent have you felt uncomfortable when sharing personal experiences and feelings in class?" A participant was considered to experience discomfort if their score was equal to, or greater than, 7 points out of 10 on both questions.

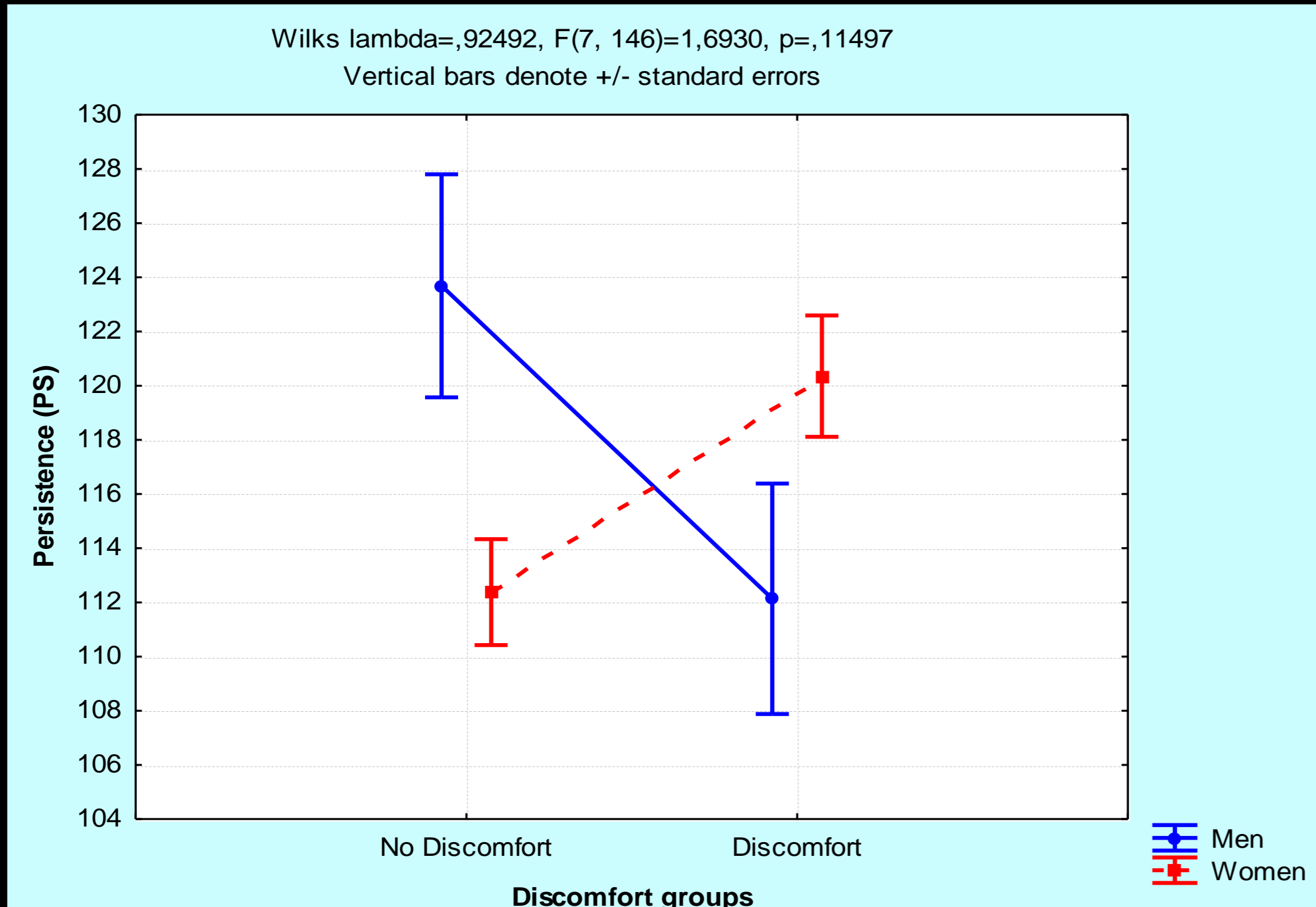
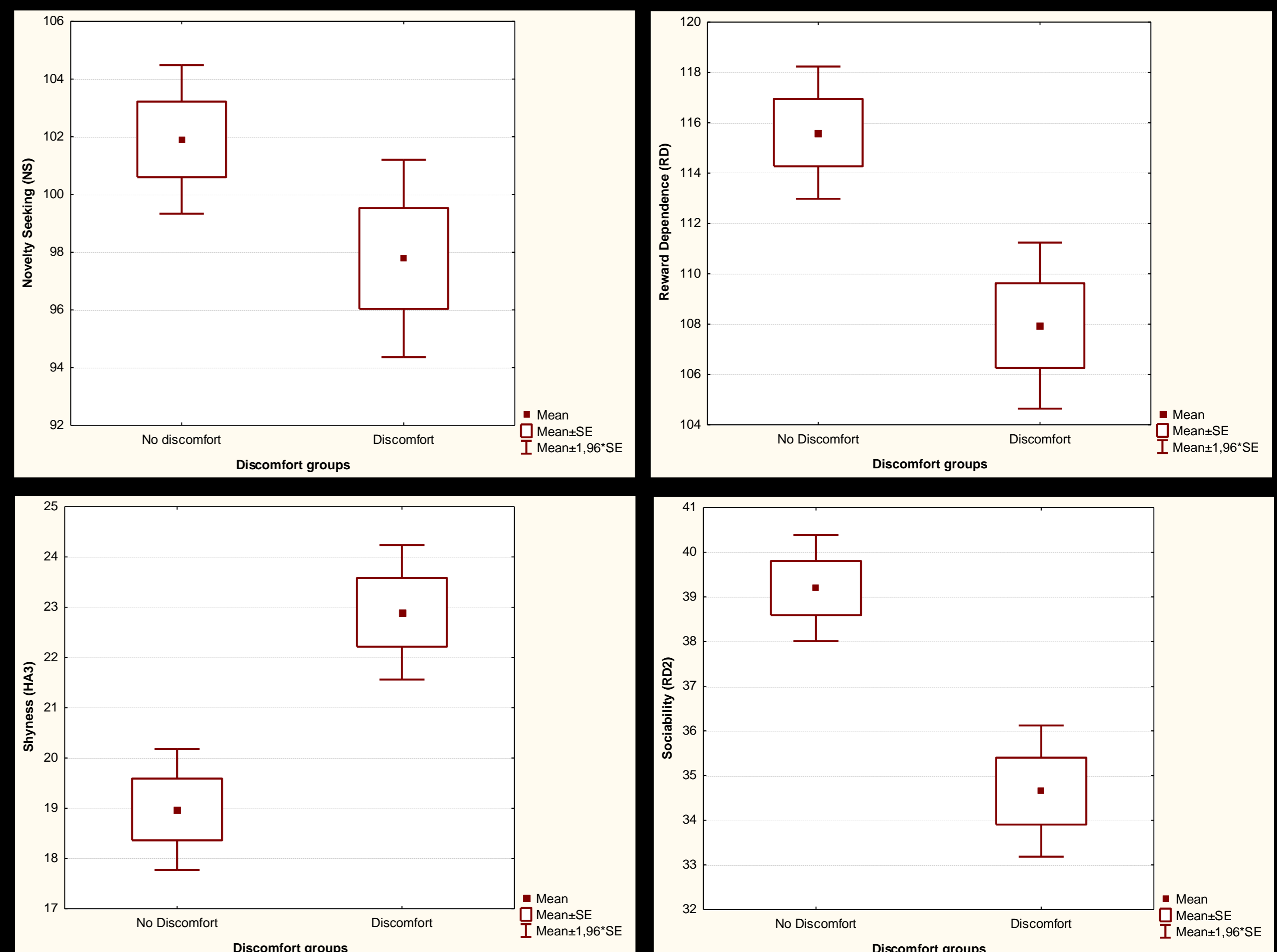
## RESULTS

Several fixed-effect Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were carried out taking as dependent variables the dimensions of the NEO-FFI-R and dimensions and traits of the TCI-140. Table 1 and Figures 1 – 4 show the statistically significant differences after having corrected the significance level.

| Table 1                | Discomfort (n= 87) | No Discomfort (n=69) |       |       |                |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|----------------|
|                        | Mean (SD)          | Mean (SD)            | p     | g     | IC (95%)       |
| Novelty Seeking (NS)   | 97.78 (14.5)       | 101.91 (12.6)        | .030  | -0.31 | (-0.63, 0.01)  |
| Reward Dependence (RD) | 107.94 (13.98)     | 115.6 (12.49)        | .007  | -0.58 | (-0.90, -0.26) |
| Shyness (HA3)          | 22.90 (5.67)       | 18.98 (5.73)         | <.001 | 0.68  | (0.36, 1.01)   |
| Sociability (RD2)      | 34.65 (6.22)       | 39.19 (5.65)         | .001  | -0.76 | (-1.09, -0.44) |

In the NEO-FFI-R, no significant differences were found between students who anticipated discomfort and those who did not. In the dimensions of the TCI-140, students who anticipated more discomfort presented lower scores in *Novelty Seeking* and *Reward Dependence*, with the magnitude of the differences varying between low and moderate. At the level of traits, these students presented higher levels of *Shyness (HA3)* and lower levels of *Sociability (RD2)*, being moderate the magnitude of the differences.

Figs. 1-4. Statistically significant differences in dimensions and traits of the TCI-140



A significant interaction between sex and anticipated discomfort was found. Women who did not anticipate discomfort scored significantly lower in *Persistence (PS)* than men in the same condition. Instead, women who anticipated more discomfort scored higher than men who also anticipated more discomfort ( $F_{1,152} = 8.68$   $p = .004$ ). The same pattern was observed for all the *PS* traits.

### Regression analysis

Several multiple regression analyses were carried out, taking the degree of discomfort as a criterion variable and the different personality variables as predictor variables. The analysis was carried out using the *Stepwise* method, the residuals were analyzed, and the Durbin-Watson test was applied to determine their interdependence.

| I.V.               | $\beta$ | p    | R <sup>2</sup> | $\Delta R^2$ |
|--------------------|---------|------|----------------|--------------|
| Isolated (- RD2)   | -.218   | .034 | .195           | .195         |
| Detachment (- RD3) | -.269   | .004 | .225           | .030         |
| Shyness (HA3)      | .208    | .010 | .252           | .027         |
| Helpfulness (CO3)  | .163    | .026 | .272           | .020         |

The best model was achieved with four traits of the TCI-140. The discomfort was explained by *Isolation* (low scores in RD2), *Detachment* (low scores in RD3), *Shyness* (high scores in HA3), and *Helpfulness* (high scores in CO3: obliging).

## CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ Knowing the personality profile most likely to anticipate discomfort (i.e., shyness, self-control, detachment, eagerness of effort) in the training of therapeutic techniques and skills with experiential methodology can allow better attention to personal and professional development during training, mitigating discomfort and increasing therapeutic learning.
- ✓ Discomfort seems to have a motivating effect on women, but not on men. So, it is important to be aware of men who anticipate discomfort to avoid its potential demotivating effect.



## Personality and discomfort in a therapeutic skills training program using experiential methodology.

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