

Yellowgoat interview

- KA: So now we are being recorded I just wanted to get your verbal consent that you're happy to proceed with the interview
- Yellowgoat: Yeah
- KA: OK amazing. Um so first off huge thank you for participating. Of course it's kind of your participation and the participation of all my little participants that really makes my research and everyone in the lab is hugely hugely grateful for you taking the time out of your day um to come talk about this with me. Um and (.) yeah we're gonna start off with a couple of um just ice breaker questions and this is just to get you into the flow of interview questions um and you can interpret these kind of however (.) however you would like to. I'm not looking for a certain you know bit of information here. Um but I would love to get a little bit get to know you a little bit better and maybe find out what some of your likes and dislikes and things you're passionate about are
- Yellowgoat: Um ((pause)) hm ((pause)) um I don't know ((pause)) um
- KA: I'm sorry it's a bit of a really broad question
- Yellowgoat: Yeah um I like (.) I like art um I don't do it very often but I do like to do art and (.) I like reading and uh (.) uh music and singing
- KA: Ohh I'm really really jealous I can't sing at all and I've always wanted to. I think it's such an amazing talent to have
- Yellowgoat: Mm
- KA: Um and with that art do you are there any specific things you like to do? Is it like painting or drawing or?
- Yellowgoat: I ((stutters)) like drawing. I don't yeah I don't really do very often. I haven't been doing it a lot recently
- KA: Mm ah that's nice. And about the books what- do you have any like favourite books or?
- Yellowgoat: Um I don't really have favourite books I yeah I don't. *I like philosophy books.*
- KA: Mm I've been trying to read more in the last year. It was my New Year's resolution for this year. So yeah um so in terms of myself I've told you all of the stuff about my job and my work. But alongside that I also really like dancing even though I'm not very good at it I like having something that I can do that's a bit of a distraction from my work. Uh and yeah I have never received a formal diagnosis for autism but as I've been researching it more as an adult we've noticed that there were a lot of things in my childhood. Whilst I received a uh diagnosis for generalised anxiety disorder when I was very young um looking back we think maybe I was one of the many women who was not diagnosed. So I guess that that's kind of why I have this interest in this area of research specifically. Um cool and in terms of you and I guess your this is a really cheesy way to say it but your like autism journey when were you diagnosed?
- Yellowgoat: Um I was about thirteen so like two years ago

KA: And was that quite a positive thing for you to get the diagnosis or neutral or?

Yellowgoat: Uh yeah it's probably positive yeah

KA: Yeah yeah um and was was it something that you had (.) kind of suspected for a while before getting the diagnosis or?

Yellowgoat: Mm well uh not me but um my mum my mum had talked to me about it a bit but no I didn't really

KA: Mm and have you found that um I guess uh people around you and your school and also I guess um like any sort of formal psychology team that you were in contact with have they been supportive of you in the process?

Yellowgoat: Um ((pause)) yeah I (.) I guess so yes

KA: Mm yeah well I'm glad to hear that. I know sometimes it can be a bit of a mixed bag and some people are really good with it. Some people are less so

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: And what about now I guess your experience with and I want to check I'm using I guess the right words here that you would be comfortable with but any experiences of anxiety or stress or things like that? How would you sort of describe that?

Yellowgoat: Yeah um (.) uh do you mean what experiences I've had or?

KA: Yeah just quite broadly like um you know is it something that you experience quite often? Is it something you've experienced throughout your life?

Yellowgoat: Yeah and throughout my life yeah um ((pause)) uh yeah. *Since year 2 in primary school.*

KA: Yeah and how does it kind of present? Are there certain things that might trigger you to feel a bit more stressed than other things?

Yellowgoat: Um yeah like if something's going on or yeah. *Like moving school, people staying in our house or visiting, going to noisy crowded places and feeling under pressure to do something I'm not comfortable with, speaking to certain people.*

KA: Mm yeah so is it like if there's like a certain stressful life event or something like that

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Yeah and if we have a think a little bit about what it is about that life event that might be stressful is it you know um feeling kind of a lack of control about it is it whether or not it's predictable or not? Um (.)

Yellowgoat: Um probably a lack of control of things yeah

KA: Yeah ((pause)) OK and how are you I guess with um (.) social like bigger social groups and things like that is that something that makes you a bit anxious or?

Yellowgoat: Uhh I do I wouldn't it doesn't make me particularly anxious but I do try to it might make me a bit anxious. Uh I do avoid (.) um (.) certain yeah I dunno I do sometimes avoid that kind of thing. *I would avoid it if I don't like the people but if I like the people it is worth it.*

KA: Yeah yeah um and I'm also gonna ask a bit about um like sensory things and whether or not that can ever drive you to be anxious because for some but not all um autistic adolescents um some sensory information like touch or smell or sound can be quite intense and that can be quite stress inducing and I wondered if that was something you had experienced with?

Yellowgoat: Uh yeah I guess like noisy places like the tube um. *Large shops are too bright and cluttered and I don't like the music. The ninja blender in the kitchen is too noisy, aswell as the extractor fan on the hob. My brother listening to reels with annoying voices on his phone and annoying music. Coffee grinders in a café and music and general noise in restaurants. The smell of petrol. The smell of airplanes and crowed airports. Bright lights and damp smells in school. Certain voices are hard to listen to if they are too loud, over enthusiastic or whispering can be very uncomfortable. Also noises in the room from the lights or some making annoying noises make it hard to concentrate.*

KA: Mm

Yellowgoat: Can be (.) and light oh no wait it light doesn't really it (.) it just gives me a bit of a headache but it probably doesn't help that kind of thing. *Light is very uncomfortable for me and the noises from them too. I wear sunglasses with yellow lenses that make the colour of things feel a bit better but its still sucks!*

KA: Yeah yeah. So is it a bit more maybe when you're already a bit stressed and then that sensory stuff-

Yellowgoat: Yeah I mean on its own it probably wouldn't (.) uh bother me so much but yeah when it is like on top of something else. *On its own it is difficult but when I'm already anxious it can make me feel much worse.*

KA: Yeah OK yeah thanks for sharing that with me. That makes a lot of sense and a lot of the time we do see it's these like combinations of all of these different things that together make us a bit anxious. Um (.) and this is a bit of a tricky question um and this might be you know this is something that varies hugely across the participants we ask but for some they say that for them um their experiences of anxiety and their autism is like this. They're like completely entwined with one another. And they think that for them (.) uh (.) were they not autistic they actually wouldn't experience anxiety at all. And then for some of our participants they say the complete opposite they say that no no no my autism is one thing and that actually doesn't relate to my anxiety at all. Um so I wondered how you felt about that? Do you see them as coming hand in hand, or are they quite separate?

Yellowgoat: Hmm well to be honest I don't really think of me (.) I don't really think of me having autism I mean I do of course have autism but I don't think I wouldn't blame (.) the autism label for that because I think it's just part of who I am and it's just people put their label on. So I don't I ((stutters)) think I mean if I didn't have autism I wouldn't be me would I?

KA: Mm

Yellowgoat: So I (.) I think I just say it's the way I am I just generally think that um (.) I (.) react quite a lot to that kind of thing so uh anxiety and stuff so I don't really know

KA: Hmm yeah it's definitely It's quite a funny way of thinking isn't it? Trying to think well if I wasn't myself would I would I?

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Yeah and you're definitely not the first to say that actually. And that's definitely one of the themes we want to explore a bit more in the paper is this idea of (.) um you know it (.) autism isn't just something that's kind of an add-on it's a core part of who you are and um yeah to try and imagine things without it. I guess a related question um would be are there kind of aspects of um ((pause)) so I guess uh to start the question again sorry um (.) but there are I guess circumstances where the outside world is perhaps not accommodating or adaptive enough to I guess any group of people whose whose (.) who think about the world or whose brains and cognitions we'd say work a bit differently and it's not very sort of accommodating to that. So examples may be um in lessons for students who say for example have ADHD the hour long structure of a lesson with no break

Yellowgoat: Mm

KA: Is not very accommodating to that. Um and sometimes it's that lack of accommodation we think rather than anything inherent (.) to (.) for example ADHD or autism itself that's causing that anxiety. Um and do you think that that's perhaps something you might agree with?

Yellowgoat: Mm yeah yeah I guess so yeah

KA: Yeah and can you think of maybe any ways that you've like experienced that mismatch yourself? Like are there any examples when perhaps the environment hasn't been totally accommodating to you? Yellowgoat: Uh yeah um ((pause)) I don't really know in particular but I think I yeah I think so

Primary school was hard for me but it was manageable. The worst bit was navigating friendships in the playground and partners for school trips. The girls would choose a partner for a trip (sometimes a year in advance of a planned trip) and I would usually end up sitting next to the girl I had the most difficulties with throughout school. The teachers were not willing to help with this problem. When I left primary school, I was relieved and ready for a fresh start with a different group of people. I was hopeful for a better future.

At my 1st mainstream secondary school there were lots of things, large noisy classes (30), harsh lights with noise, noisy humming projectors, busy noisy halls and canteen, lots of bad smells, people spraying perfume and body spray in class in PE changing. Busy smelly bus with people shouting and pushing. I was given a quite space at lunch but felt isolated and lonely by myself.

Not being able to use the toilet made me feel very worried about needing the toilet and I was also not comfortable to use the toilets during the break because there were older girls in there doing things like colouring their hair with Sharpies and it made me feel very uneasy. The school allowed me to use a disabled toilet and gave me a toilet pass. I didn't actually use the toilet pass, it just helped me to know that I could if I needed to. I felt really uneasy about having to take my shoes and socks off in drama and also having to rush to put them back on after the class and get to my next class on time. Teachers who shouted also made me feel very uncomfortable. The fear of getting detention made me feel scared.

I eventually started to walk the 30 minutes to school because I couldn't cope with the noise and smell on the bus.

Starting Secondary School

When I started school in September 2019 classes were 50 minutes long. I found the whole experience of school (including the social side) manageable with quite a lot of effort on my part and support from the school. I had made 2 friends (from primary school) I would spend most time with and got to know a few others. I didn't always feel included and got quite a lot of mixed signals from the 2 friends I walked to and from school with, I was just about coping with everything when lockdown started in March 2020.

1st Lockdown

I hated being stuck at home and was desperate to get back to school. I wasn't able to maintain friendships on the phone and felt very isolated and lost. Getting used to home learning was also overwhelming and I got behind on work and found this very stressful.

Return After 1st Lockdown

When we returned to school in September 2020 I couldn't wait to get back! But when I got back it was a nightmare. Everything had changed. Instead of 5 x 50 minute classes where we moved between classes, the timetable changed so that we had a mix of 50, 100 or 150 classes! We were mostly in the same class all day and teachers can't do us.

On Monday we had 1 x 50 minute art lesson, 1 x 50 minute maths lesson, 50 minute lunch and then 150 minutes of maths with no break.

So 4 of the 5 maths classes for the week were on one day, and only 1 50 minute lunch break (before we had 1 x 20 min break and 50 min lunch).

Each day was similar with the focus on 1 particular subject.

Much less moving around and changing classes and more staying in the same room.

Monday was the worst for me because we were in the same maths class for most of the day and it was very dark due to black out blinds and the dim lighting made me feel like it was night time. It was very cramped with around 30-37 students. I was in set 3, the most busy class and behaviour was not good. People were spraying perfume. There weren't enough desks for students and not enough room for more desks. 3 of us shared a table for 2. I sat at the end of the table and had no space for my legs or my equipment, which I put on a spare chair. I had to turn round in my chair to see the board.

Other students seemed to enjoy it but for me it was hell.

The noise of the whiteboards clanking when everyone took them out and put them away at the same time was horrible, and the teacher would ask us to take them out and put them away continuously throughout the day. It was like torture!

In addition to that, there were building works going on at the school. I was sitting near the window and the noise of the drilling was unbearable. I ended up getting an ear infection in my left ear as a result and had to have time off school. Prior to that, I was aiming for 100% attendance because we were incentivised for that.

I was often sat next to boys who were not following the rules, including 2 who were arrested, and this made me feel very unsafe. Many students (mainly boys) made fun of me in maths and much of the time in school and when I was walking home from school.

The friends I would walk to and from school with started leaving me behind and I had to walk alone, so then my Mum started driving me. That friendship completely broke down and it was hard to deal with.

2nd Lockdown

When the next lockdown started in January 2021, I was relieved and happy because the new routine in school had become unbearable for me and I was also finding the social aspect more and more challenging as a result of the difficulties I was experiencing. It helped that I now knew what to expect from home learning and there were improvements to it. We had form time online at the start and the end of the day and I stuck to the timetable and work set during the day. I managed it well and got really good results in my assessments and was 8th in my year. I was pleased with how I had done but also, I found the social side more and more difficult and this was isolating and depressing.

Return After 2nd Lockdown

When we returned to school again in April 2021 the timetable had changed again. Not back to what it was at the start but to 3 x 100 minute classes a day. This was better than the previous term but it was still very hard for me to manage 100 minute long classes when I was feeling bad about everything and my main friendships breaking down. Teacher did introduce me to 3 new students because he knew I was struggling but it felt like a lot of pressure because we were all quite quiet and I felt the need to start conversation. The conversations were hard.

Autism Diagnosis

I had my diagnosis in July 2021 and hoped that when I returned to school in September 2021 things could be better. Unfortunately it wasn't and I was feeling worse and worse.

Breakdown of My Mainstream School Placement

Every time I returned to school it was harder and when I returned in January 2022 it was impossible. I just couldn't cope and that was when it was decided (with advice from a clinical psychologist) that I should no longer attend because it was detrimental to my mental health. We started the EHCP process.

Inclusivity?

We had chosen the school because of its reputation for being supportive of students with special educational needs. The school still does 3 x 100 minute lessons a day and I do wonder if it is proven to be better for most students or if it is designed to deter students with special educational needs.

Independent School for Autistic Students

At my 2nd school which was supposed to be for autistic students classes were smaller (5) and that was better, however the lighting was even worse than mainstream because there were no windows for natural light and the walls were bright white and it was unbearable and gave me headaches and made it impossible to concentrate on learning. I also felt that many of the staff didn't understand my needs or try to help (as much as mainstream did, which was surprising). Communication was not good.

Independent Specialist School

My current school try to accommodate my sensory needs but I really don't like it because I feel very isolated because the teaching is one to one and it feels like a lot of pressure being the only student in the class and I can't stand it. I can't see any social opportunities there for me and don't see myself being able to complete GCSEs there. I also can't see any alternatives and this makes me feel hopeless for the future.

Anxiety

I think these experiences have been the main contributing factor to my anxiety. I can manage well when I am able to feel in control of my environment and have suitable choices.

KA: Yeah yeah OK. We're going to move on now to some deeper questions about anxiety or stress or yeah however you choose to label it

Yellowgoat: Mm

KA: If you were to describe this feeling to some lucky person who has never ever felt it before in their life how would you describe it as feeling?

Yellowgoat: Um ((pause)) hm ((pause)) I'm (.) I'm not really sure

KA: Would you like me to maybe give an example of how it feels for me and then we can talk about maybe how it feels different or the same for you?

Yellowgoat: Mm

KA: Um so for me I think the way I feel anxiety is a kind of restlessness and I feel like I don't feel very good so I feel this real need to do something about it and I feel like I have to be constantly on the go and um (.) it makes me feel very um (.) hyper alert in my body so I can feel that my heart is beating a lot in my chest and I feel very shaky and it makes me feel quite sick at the same time too. And then I really really struggle to get to sleep because I'm so (.) um you know everything is so hyper alert um and that's probably how anxiety would feel for me. How about how about for you? Is there anything there that's similar?

Yellowgoat: Umm yeah uh ((pause)) yeah uh ((pause)) I feel mm (.) what's the word (.) trying to think of the word

KA: Yeah take your time

Yellowgoat: Mm uh like very like on the lookout for things going wrong I don't really know

KA: Ohh maybe like vigilant is that?

Yellowgoat: ((laughs)) Yeah that's the word

KA: Yeah ((laughs))

Yellowgoat: Mm yeah I'm very vigilant uh er like (.) um waiting for something um yeah

KA: Mm

Yellowgoat: Something so don't really know

((pause))

KA: Yeah yeah and um sometimes we like to split anxiety up into different parts. Um so a lot of psychologists describe anxiety as you have like the physical side of it you have your thoughts and then you have your emotions and you have your behaviour um and so some people call it a hot cross bun model because like it's like split with a cross and there are four different parts

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: And maybe we could take it in turns and talk through those four things. And of course not everyone experiences anxiety in all of the four different ways. Um but if we start with physical are there certain like physical signs you get when you're feeling a bit anxious?

Yellowgoat: Um heart you know ((laughs))

KA: Yeah yeah

Yellowgoat: Mm ((pause)) not really sure

KA: Yeah mm some other ones that you might or might not have um you know some people describe feeling a bit dizzy or a bit sick

Yellowgoat: Oh also feeling dizzy I have it yeah

KA: Yeah ((pause)) OK. Um and in terms of the thoughts are there certain thoughts that you tend to have when you're feeling a bit anxious?

Yellowgoat: Um whenever I'm feeling anxious I'm (.) even if the issue I'm having isn't anxious I usually even if the what whatever's going on that's making me feel like that isn't that (.) even if it's not doesn't is not that bad I usually just get quite intrusive thoughts

KA: Mm

Yellowgoat: Whenever er something goes remotely wrong I don't know it's just even if it's (.) not yeah I don't know

KA: Mm aw that sounds really nasty I'm sorry that yeah you get those thoughts. And then in terms of the emotions um you know some people describe feeling really frustrated with everything or really panicked or (.) really overwhelmed. Do any of those emotions resonate with you?

Yellowgoat: Mm yeah feeling quite overwhelmed

KA: Mm

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Yeah um(.) and then the last one the behaviours and I guess this is the one that's sometimes a bit more obvious to the people around you rather than yourself sometimes but do you think there's any particular way that you tend to behave when you're quite anxious?

Yellowgoat: Mm probably not wanting to speak to people as much as usual

KA: Yeah ((pause)) OK well thank you and yeah there were some really great answers there. Um (.) and we're going to talk about something related to anxiety now. Not of all our participants experience this so you may or may not um but that is sort of meltdowns and shutdowns. Um and have you ever experienced either of those things before?

Yellowgoat: Hmm I don't really know mm maybe meltdowns I'm not sure

KA: Yeah. What would that kind of I mean if you think about a time where you think hmm maybe that was a meltdown what did it kind of look like or feel like?

Yellowgoat: ((pause)) probably just crying or scream- not screaming just (.) I don't know no not I'm not really sure ((pause)) Maybe I don't get a meltdown

KA: Hmm well they can look very very different for different people. And there's no you know cookie cutter way you'd experienced it. And sometimes it is hard to tell because with all of these things you know (.) they're not in clearly defined and as you say sort of labelable groups and there's a lot of blurring around the edges I guess. Um but the way that we tend to think about meltdowns would be when things get so overwhelming that it causes kind of a really intense burst of emotion. Um and some behaviours that we here talked about with meltdowns can be, as you've said crying even screaming happens a lot um a lot of people you know would feel the need to like throw things or hit things um (.) and (.) yeah it can be anything of like that but it's kind of a you know when everything gets too much and it's kind of a bit of an explosion outwards. And then for a shutdown it can kind of be the reverse of that where things have got too much things are overwhelming but instead of that outward burst you kind of go inwards and (.) you maybe can just no longer take in any information about the world around you you're not very responsive everything slows right down and you just (.) some of our participants talk about you know just lying in bed for hours and not doing anything (.) um ((pause)) So yeah does either of those two things sound?

Yellowcoat: Mmm not the shutdown

KA: No

Yellowcoat: Uh not really sure it's quite hard to say what would be meltdown or what would be just me getting angry so I'm not really sure

KA: Yeah yeah um well I guess without sort of needing to label it I guess just when you have those intense emotions are there sort of things that would typically trigger that are there sort of patterns you can notice (.) with that?

Yellowcoat: Well I don't really I wouldn't generally (.) uh (.) I wouldn't (.) I don't think I'd come home from something doing whatever and then just (.) uh (.) that I don't think that would just happen. Uh but if my mum said something to me that made me think about everything or I don't know. Uh so that's why I don't really know if that would be ((pause))

KA: Ah

Yellowcoat: If that counts or I don't really know

KA: Yeah OK ((pause)) um so we're going to move on a bit now um and instead of just talking about anxiety we'll talk about emotions in general um and there's this term called alexithymia and researchers used to think that this was just part of autism and since then it's kind of been realised that no this happens in neurotypical people and autistic people and (.) it (.) we see quite high rates of it in autistic individuals but it's not um (.) you know it's not (.) in everyone and it happens outside of that group too. Um so that's why I wanted to ask you about it is because there has been this muddling before between alexithymia and autism for us it's really short- uh important to kind of check whether that's something that our participants relate to or not so we're not just assuming. Um so alexithymia just refers to a difficulty to identify and describe emotions

Yellowcoat: Mm

KA: So an example might be um if something like a big life event happens someone who's alexithymic might feel that their body is in a state of arousal so they can feel that they're quite you know there's something very different something's changed in them

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: But they might be like hmm I'm not quite sure if I'm feeling very happy about this or I'm not sure if I'm feeling quite worried about this um

Yellowgoat: Mm

KA: So is that something that you've ever experienced?

Yellowgoat: Hmm no

KA: No OK. So does it tend to be quite straightforward for you to identify?

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Yeah OK. And we'll do a couple of examples of that now if that's OK um and this might be a bit funny sometimes to put into words but say you were feeling really really happy how would you know that you were feeling happy? Does being happy feel a certain way for you?

Yellowgoat: Mm yeah mm ((pause)) uh ((pause)) I dunno I just like feel happy

KA: Yeah

Yellowgoat: Hmm yeah I don't I don't really know how (.)

KA: Mm

Yellowgoat: I would just know you know I dunno

KA: Yeah and do you think it's sometimes more that you know (.) mm because you know the situation is good or is it more that you kind of can listen to your body and your body sort of tells you as well like oh I'm feeling happy?

Yellowgoat: Yeah uh probably because sometimes I'm happy when I probably shouldn't be happy ((laughs))

KA: Mm ((laughs))

Yellowgoat: I mean like sometimes I'm just feeling really happy for no reason

KA: Yeah

Yellowgoat: Um ((pause)) but yeah just yeah

KA: Yeah so that sounds like you yeah probably don't really experience alexithymia as you say. What about maybe if you were really nervous about something again is there certain ways that being nervous would feel to you?

Yellowgoat: Um (.) nervous uh ((pause)) yeah I'd just feel like my heart beating and stuff just be like yeah I don't really know

KA: Mm yeah. And of course I think for everyone there are certain circumstances when it is a bit harder to tell what you're feeling. I guess when something happens (.) that is both good in a

way and bad in a way. And then sometimes in that situation it can be a bit difficult to think um hm am I overall feeling good about this or feeling bad about this? Um is that something that you've ever experienced?

Yellowgoat: No I don't think so

KA: No OK. And then the last example I'll talk about in this section is sometimes with surprises and sometimes for people who are alexithymic if someone says ohh I have a surprise for you and again they'll feel that rush of something but they're like oh I don't know if I'm really scared about the surprise or I don't know if I'm excited about the surprise

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Um and is that something?

Yellowgoat: No

KA: OK cool cool so yeah that's really interesting it seems like as we say you have a really good handle on yeah. I do not ((laughs)) well I sometimes do but sometimes I don't realise I'm getting angry about something until a few hours later and then I realised I've been really really tensed up for ages

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Cool. So we're at the halfway point now and I just wanted to check did you want to take a short break or are you happy to keep going?

Yellowgoat: I'm OK yeah

KA: Cool cool. So the next section that we're talking about I'm very biased because this is what I research and I love it so much but the next section is on something called interception. And interception is our ability to feel signals that come from inside of our body and understand what this means. Um so we've actually already covered a few of these but some examples are how fast our heart is beating how hungry we are how badly we need to use the bathroom or how hard we're breathing. And obviously it's useful for us to a degree to be able to recognise these things because they um tell us about certain needs our body has so you know our ability to think hmm I'm quite thirsty would then drive us to drink some water

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Which is good. But sometimes the way we think about these signals um can actually make us a bit stressed or can cause other problems ((pause)) So what we want to look at as researchers is whether we can understand how I guess how people who are slightly more anxious might be interpreting these signals (.) Um so thinking about the heartbeat one first um ((pause)) If someone said to me how fast is your heart beating right now I could take my pulse um but if I weren't to take my pulse if I wasn't to like sort of touch my body from the outside and if I wanted to just focus inside (.) for me I can't feel anything unless I've just done a run or if I'm really nervous about something then I can feel it but just now ((pause)) I can't feel anything. I don't know when my heart is beating. Some- for some people they can feel their heart beating all of the time. They're not always focused on it but if for example if I asked you now you know focused on your heartbeat. Is that something that you can feel or not really?

Yellowgoat: ((pause)) I don't think so no

KA: No?

Yellowgoat: Maybe a little bit but I don't think so I don't think so

KA: Yeah And when you sort of sense to feel that is it kind of like your chest that you're feeling for or your neck or?

Yellowgoat: ((pause)) Um I don't know maybe (.) uh I don't know

KA: Mm but are there times and I know we sort of mentioned about feeling your heartbeat maybe when you're a bit anxious um would you say in in times like that that you actually can start to feel it?

Yellowgoat: ((yawns)) probably yeah sorry

KA: Oh no worries

Yellowgoat: Yeah um (.) probably probably I don't know yeah

KA: Yeah and is it sort of you can feel the like-

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Beating?

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Yeah yeah. Um and are there other times as well maybe after exercise where you can feel a bit more?

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Mm. And when you feel your heart beating (.) can that ever be like a stressful experience in itself for you? Does the sensation of feeling your heart sometimes-

Yellowgoat: No I don't think so

KA: No OK cool. Um yeah so the reason I ask about that specifically is for some but again not all of their- of our participants um they experience something called catastrophising which might be that when they're a little bit stressed about something their heart starts beating and then they feel their heart starts beating so they think oh this is a sign I must be stressed. So then they get more stressed

Yellowgoat: Oh

KA: Which makes their heart beat faster. Um and you kind of get that cycle um. So that's that's not something you?

Yellowgoat: No

KA: No that's good that's good. Um ((pause)) OK and the next signal we'll talk about a bit is how hungry you are and is that something that you tend to have quite a good understanding of or?

Yellowgoat: Yeah I think so yeah

KA: Yeah um so are you able to eat we would describe this as sort of intuitively so you can just feel when your body is hungry and know you need to eat?

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Yeah cool yeah. So you don't need to like I don't know eat by the clock we would say?

Yellowgoat: No

KA: OK cool. Um and relating to that a bit this might be a bit of a sensitive topic so feel free to skip if you would like to um but as well as looking at anxiety I also um look at different eating behaviours as well. Um and are there any I guess concerns you have with food or?

Yellowgoat: Um no

KA: No? Cool. And just to follow up on that are there certain I guess sensory requirements you have with food or there's certain things you don't like?

Yellowgoat: No

KA: No cool cool. And again I know it feels like I'm really digging in on this but are you sort of um (.) you don't think you have an eating disorder or anything?

Yellowgoat: No

KA: No good good I'm glad. And related to that hunger one we have also feelings of fullness as well. Are you quite good at being able to tell OK I'm full I'm going to stop?

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Fantastic. Um and then again the other one in this similar vein feelings of being thirsty?

Yellowgoat: Yes that's quite normal yeah

KA: Yeah

Yellowgoat: I know that yeah

KA: Yeah cool. Um and the last one second last one I'm reading my list wrong but uh needing to use the toilet or the bathroom are you quite?

Yellowgoat: Mm yeah I (.) I um (.) I usually am OK but sometimes when I'm going out somewhere I'll just feel like I need it when I probably don't need to use the toilet like before bed as well

KA: Ahh OK OK. And do you think that might just be a habit thing so like if you normally uh use the bathroom before you go out and then the next time when you're about to go out you think hmm do I need to use it? Or do you think it could even be a bit of a nerves thing?

Yellowgoat: Hmm (.) I'm not really sure ((pause)) I think sometimes I just feel like I need it more than I actually do and when I'm nervous yeah

KA: Yeah OK. Um ((pause)) And yeah the last one was just your breathing rate and sort of how hard you're breathing. Do you find that that's something you take quite a lot of notice of or not so much?

Yellowgoat: Actually now I realise I can feel my heart beating in my legs

KA: Oh wow OK

Yellowgoat: I dunno why I uh (.) my breathing um I don't really think about my breathing

KA: No. One of my participants who I had on Friday actually was telling me I never normally think about my breathing but now I'm thinking about my breathing and I feel like I'm having to manually breathe

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: And I was like oh, no I'm so sorry ((laughs)) Um but cool to go back to what you said about the heart beating in your legs that's really interesting. Is it something that you think you've only kind of just you're just feeling it now because we've been ((overlap)) talking about it?

Yellowgoat: Maybe I just put my legs in a weird position actually I'm not really sure why

KA: Yeah

Yellowgoat: Like I think it is I wouldn't have noticed that if we haven't been talking about it obviously because now I'm focusing

KA: Yeah. It is quite like a interesting thing though because (.) yeah for some people they can almost like you know you tune in and out of a radio station. Um or maybe you're too young to even hear and know about that. But you know for some people that it it's kind of always accessible but they need to be thinking OK I wanna focus on my heartbeat. But for me even if I'm really like I need to focus to feel my heartbeat. I have no idea what that would even feel like

Yellowgoat: Oh yeah

KA: Cool and some of these signals that we've just discussed are like hunger fullness thirst are there times where it becomes (.) easier or harder to uh feel them or understand them?

Yellowgoat: Mm not really sure. Don't think so

KA: OK. Yeah just so for some people for example when they're quite anxious because maybe because they're distracted by so many other things or maybe because their body's in fight or flight a bit then they find it a bit harder to tell for example when they're hungry um. Or but is that something you find or not so much?

Yellowgoat: Um no

KA: OK cool. Um (.) and yeah are there any any of those signals at all that are a bit (.) unpleasant to feel or not really?

Yellowgoat: No no not really

KA: Cool cool and ((pause)) yeah this is kind of a uh related question um (.) but that is with experiences of like masking and the effect that this might have. Um so do you know what is meant by the term masking?

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: Yeah is that something that you find yourself doing sometimes or not really?

Yellowgoat: Um maybe unconsciously but no I don't think so

KA: Mm OK um when when you sort of (.) I guess when you're in situations where you might be unconsciously masking a bit more does that kind of affect the way that you're I guess paying attention to your body?

Yellowgoat: No I don't think so

KA: OK fantastic. Um ((pause)) So we've kind of gone through the majority of questions I had um but I just wanted to give you a bit of space as well to talk about I guess your views on um (.) labelling versus not labelling anxiety because I thought that that was something really really interesting over e-mail that was discussed. So yeah could you tell me a bit more about your beliefs with that?

Yellowgoat: Um I can't really remember what I was thinking about when I said that um ((pause)) I think ((pause)) hm ((pause)) I dunno I think I just ((pause)) can't really remember what I was thinking

KA: Yeah that's OK. Is it sort of (.) I think kind of the way your mum described it was that yeah you didn't kind of um (.) you wouldn't label yourself as like having anxiety versus not having anxiety because you weren't sort of like a huge fan of things being labelled in such a way

Yellowgoat: Yeah (.) I don't really know um I mean I think I think I just change a lot of the time. So I don't really know (.) it really depends what's going on and I don't (.) uh as with everyone I guess but I don't really know

KA: Yeah so is it more that you cause of yeah the things changing. You're not always sure if maybe you know labelling it as one thing is the most useful

Yellowgoat: Yeah (.) definitely yeah

KA: Yeah OK. And I wondered if I could just ask you um about your like schooling situation at the moment. Are you in school full time or from home or?

Yellowgoat: Um I'm in part time I go in like I've been going in like an hour a day

KA: Mmkay

Yellowgoat: Um but I it's ((stutters)) quite difficult to go in at the moment

KA: Mmkay. Do you are you comfortable to talk a bit more about that like maybe why it's difficult?

Yellowgoat: Um yeah I just I just don't really like the place that um I go to it's one to one teaching and um it's not very inspiring

KA: Ah OK. Um (.) and (.) do you think mm (.) is it sort of just the lack of inspiration or or can it be quite like a like uncomfortable experience for you?

Yellowgoat: Yeah that as well it's I don't like being the only student and it's it feels like there's a lot of attention on me and um ((pause)) yeah

KA: Mm ((pause)) OK. And in terms of sort of I guess beyond (.) things you want to do beyond school like in an ideal scenario, what would be sort of the next steps for you?

Yellowgoat: I really don't know um

KA: That's OK I'm 26 and I still don't know ((laughs))

Yellowgoat: ((laughs)) Hmm (.) yeah I don't know maybe I don't know

KA: Yeah that's OK that was a bit of a horrible question. Even when I ask all of my friends oh what do you want to do after uni they're like I dunno ((laughs))

Yellowgoat: Yeah

KA: I think it's normal (.) OK and as we sort of come to the end I basically want to I guess shift the roles a little bit and I wanted to double check. Is there anything you would like to add or to ask me? Or it might just be that you think that there's stuff that I haven't talked about yet but that is like quite relevant and important to consider?

Yellowgoat: Hmm I don't really know I'm not sure

KA: OK great well um as I sort of said um at the beginning um when you get the transcript back it might be that there are certain things you want to add or certain things you want to edit and that's absolutely OK

Yellowgoat: OK

KA: Yeah. OK fantastic. So I'm just going to stop the recording now