

Survey Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: Lillian Starling

I am currently undertaking the Psychology Honours program in the School of Medicine and Psychology at the Australian National University. I am working under my research supervisor, Dr Brett Scholz, who is a Senior Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer in the School of Medicine and Psychology at the Australian National University.

Project Title: Mental Health Consumer Attitudes Toward Practitioner Lived Experience

General Outline of the Project:

- **Description and Methodology:** This study aims to explore the attitudes of mental health consumers towards mental health practitioners with personal or “lived” experience (that is, first-hand personal experience) of a psychological illness. This study seeks to explore consumer perspectives regarding mental health practitioners who are specifically either a registered Psychologist or Psychiatrist. The mental health consumers of interest include individuals who have previously accessed or currently access mental health support via consultation with a registered Psychologist or Psychiatrist. Practitioner lived experience of mental illness involves the first-hand understanding of psychological ill-health following an episode or occurrence of mental illness, ranging across the full spectrum of mental health challenges, from occasional concerns to the diagnosis of more chronic illnesses. Should you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked a series of questions relating to your perspectives on Psychologists and Psychiatrists with lived-experience/s of mental illness either through an online survey platform or interview, depending on your preference. This document is the participant information sheet for those would wish to complete the online survey.
- **Participants:** Responses will be collected from approximately thirty survey participants who identify as having previously accessed or currently accessing Psychological or Psychiatric services. This includes individuals who have either privately sought support from these mental health professionals or accessed them via a referral from a General Practitioner, perhaps through a Medicare ‘Mental Health Treatment Plan’. Individuals who have seen a Psychologist or Psychiatrist for any number of sessions are welcome to participate. Participants must be over the age of 18.
- **Use of Data and Feedback:** Your responses will be analysed with other participant responses to form the investigation for a Psychology Honours thesis. Findings may be presented at academic and/or health conferences and may be published in academic journals. Your responses will be de-identified and accessed in full by only the researcher and supervisor. Excerpts of your responses may be included in the thesis, with all identifying details removed. A summary of the study’s results will be available upon its completion in November 2023 via website through which you signed up for the study ([here](#)).

Participant Involvement:

- **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your participation at any stage prior to survey submission. You do not need to provide an explanation. Responses to questions are also voluntary, and you have the right to choose not to respond to any particular question asked by the researcher without explanation – you will be able to move onto the next question without needing to complete the current question. If you do choose to provide a reason for your withdrawal, this information will not be used or included in the study in any

way. Withdrawal can be completed at any point during the completion of the survey but cannot be completed once survey responses have been submitted. As such, we encourage you to thoroughly consider your intention to participate before submitting your survey responses.

- **What does participation in the research entail?** Should you choose to participate in this study, you will complete an online survey. The survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes and will consist of 8-10 questions. Questions will explore your attitudes regarding mental health practitioners who have lived experience/s of mental illness, such as *'how would you feel if a mental health practitioner referred to their own experience of mental illness in working with you?'* Questions will not ask about your personal experiences of mental illness, but you may choose to include this information in your responses where relevant. Responses will be analysed and inform the basis of the thesis.
- **Location and Duration:** Should you choose to complete the survey, you will be provided with a link to an online survey where you will be able to submit your responses. Once accessed, this survey can then be completed virtually from anywhere. Surveys are anticipated to take approximately 20-30 minutes.
- **Risks:** While this study does not specifically investigate your personal experiences in Psychological or Psychiatric consultations, you may feel that they are relevant in responding to some of the questions. There is a risk that this may provide some discomfort for participants. To minimise any potential distress, the study's questions have been designed to be open-ended, allowing you to draw on any examples you may like to or choose not to provide this kind of information. You also may choose not to answer a question at all, stop answering a question after commencing it, or withdraw from the study entirely at any time before the survey is submitted. There is also a low risk that you may be able to be identified from your contribution to this study. To prevent this, all identifying details such as names (unless you choose otherwise on your consent form), locations in which mental health services were accessed, as well as identifying particularities about any consultation experiences will be removed from your responses. To avoid third-party identification, it is recommended that you avoid disclosing information that is confidential, defamatory or that could otherwise harm you or others. If you do experience any discomfort or distress in participating in this study, please find support services included at the bottom of this form. You are also welcome to contact the researcher or supervisor at any time to receive additional information about available support services.
- **Benefits:** While it is unlikely that you will personally directly benefit from this study, its findings may lead to the improvement of mental health services available to those struggling with mental illnesses by better capturing what consumers appreciate in these settings. We hope that through greater understanding the role of practitioner lived experience, we can improve consumer experiences with these services and better support practitioners working in the mental health field.
- **Implications of participation:** Given participant recruitment is being conducted via Facebook community groups and Psychology/Psychiatry practice reception desks, there is a chance that existing social networks may be underlying participants. Thus, there is a chance that you may have been referred to complete this study by a friend. Your choice to participate in this research is entirely voluntary. Participation in this study is not an expectation of your employment, professional relationship, association with the research team, or any other party and your choice will not affect your relationship with any party.

Exclusion criteria:

- **Participant Limitation:** Subjects will be excluded from the study if they have accessed or are currently accessing mental health support from a Psychologist or Psychiatrist who self-identifies as a “lived-experience” practitioner, and this is their only experience with Psychologists and/or Psychiatrists.

Confidentiality:

- **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality will be protected as far as the law allows. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the responses provided as a part of this study. The study will be run through Qualtrics, where responses will be temporarily stored until they are downloaded onto an ANU OneDrive server. For more information about the use of Qualtrics at the ANU, please refer to the [Privacy Impact Assessment for Qualtrics](#). Survey responses will be stored securely and in a de-identified format, with participant names being replaced by titles such as “Participant 1” (unless you choose otherwise on your consent form). These titles will be used when referring to individual participants in the thesis, and if excerpts from responses are included, other identifying details will be removed.

Privacy Notice:

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/pp1/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Data Storage:

- **Where:** Physical consent forms will be scanned and destroyed. These scanned copies will be stored in a password protected ANU OneDrive folder. Survey responses will also be stored in this ANU OneDrive folder. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to this folder. Consent forms and de-identified electronic files will be kept on file for at least five years from the date of any publication arising from the research. Electronic data may be archived or retained in a de-identified format at the School of Medicine and Psychology, in accordance with guidelines for storing and retaining data. This de-identified data may potentially be used in future research.
- **Handling of Data following the required storage period:** Electronic data may be archived or retained in a de-identified format at the School of Medicine and Psychology for at least five years, in accordance with guidelines for storing and retaining data.
- **Handling of Data following the required storage period:** At the conclusion of this research, electronic data may be archived or retained in a de-identified format at the School of Medicine and Psychology, in accordance with guidelines for storing and retaining data. This de-identified data may potentially be used in future research.

Queries and Concerns:

- **Contact Details for More Information:** If you have any further questions or concerns regarding the study, please contact the researcher, Lillian Starling, at lillian.starling@anu.edu.au or the supervisor, Dr Brett Scholz, at brett.scholz@anu.edu.au.

- **Contact Details if in Distress:** If you feel any distress or discomfort from participating in any part of this study, please contact any of the support services listed below or either of the researchers, who can provide you with further information.

Lifeline Canberra
24-hour crisis support line
Phone: 13 11 14

ANU Counselling Centre
(participants affiliated with the ANU)
Phone: (02) 6125 2442

Ethics Committee Clearance:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2023/174). If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au