



Participant Information Sheet – Humanistic Person-Centred Counsellors

Project Title: Being Person-Centred: How do counsellors and psychotherapists trained in a humanistic person-centred approach navigate professional practice and identity in Australia today?

Project Summary:

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Amanda Webb, PhD Candidate, School of Social Sciences, Western Sydney University, under the Supervision of Associate Professor Sheridan Linnell, Discipline Lead - Arts Therapy and Counselling, Western Sydney University and Dr Liz Thyer, Associate Dean - Learning and Teaching, School of Health Sciences, Western Sydney University.

Humanistic approaches to counselling and psychotherapy have historically had a substantial role in counselling education and practice. A humanistic perspective brings attention to personal meaning, values, lived experience and present moment interactions arising within the therapeutic relationship. In recent years, as counsellors and psychotherapists have found themselves increasingly working within contexts informed by managed care and medicalisation*, approaches to counselling practice and education may be changing.

The aim of this study is to explore how Australian humanistic person-centred trained counsellors and psychotherapists experience “*being person-centred*” within this context, seeking to help inform future counselling practice, education, and professional identity.

* “*Medicalisation*” operates through medical language (e.g. symptoms, disorders, illness, treatment), through practice (e.g. diagnosis, hospitalisation, administration of drugs) and through research which tries to discover genetic and biological causes of ‘mental disorders’. (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018, p. 19)

How is the study being paid for?

Western Sydney University is funding this study through Higher Degree Research funds.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a recorded interview with the primary researcher. This will take place online via Zoom at a time convenient to you. During the interview you will be asked to discuss your experiences of working as a counsellor and counselling education

How much of my time will I need to give?

It is anticipated that each individual interview will take between 60 to 90 minutes.

What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?

By undertaking the interview, participants are invited to reflect upon and share their experiences of working as a counsellor. This provides an opportunity for participants to reflect upon their counselling practice and perspectives of being a counsellor, that may be of benefit in helping clarify and/or inform future practice. While no specific benefits can be known or guaranteed, such insights may be of benefit beyond individual practice in helping inform the research findings and

be of benefit to the counselling profession as a whole, and therefore to the broader mental health and wellbeing workforce.

Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?

It is not anticipated that the discussion will raise any sensitive or confronting content, however participants will be able to move on to another topic or cease the interview at any stage. If you do become distressed, you may cease the interview and gain support through any of the following people or organisations:

- Your Clinical Supervisor, for clinical practice related matters
- Your employer Employee Access Program (EAP)
- **Beyond Blue** (ph. 1300 22 4636)
- **Lifeline** (ph. 13 11 14)

How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?

This study forms part of a PhD research project. It is anticipated the results will be formed via an analysis of audio and/or visual recordings and written interview transcripts, then disseminated via publications and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified, except with your permission. Confidentiality will be maintained through the de-identification of all transcripts and in addition pseudonyms will be used.

Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide and that your data will not be used in any other projects. Please note that minimum retention period for data collection is five years post publication. The data and information you have provided will be securely disposed of.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary, and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate you can withdraw at any time up until the end of the interview without giving reason. If you do wish to withdraw, any information that you have supplied will be destroyed. To withdraw from this research, please notify the chief investigator via email at: Amanda.Webb@westernsydney.edu.au

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about this research by sharing the study via social media platforms and/or by providing others with the chief investigators contact details.

What if I require further information?

Please contact Amanda Webb should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate.

Amanda Webb
Chief Investigator
Amanda.Webb@westernsydney.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher/s.

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H14651.