



Participant Information Sheet – General (Extended)

Project Title: Mechanism for social isolation among complex, at-risk populations

Project Summary: You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Kate McBride, Associate Professor, Translational Health Research Institute, Western Sydney University, in collaboration with Dr Elizabeth Conroy, Dr Emily Deans, Assoc Prof Gabrielle Drake, and Mr Benedict Osei Asibey. The research aims to understand the social networks of people who may experience stigma associated with health or social problem including having a gambling problem or substance use problem, large body weight, or homelessness.

How is the study being paid for?

This study is funded by Western Sydney University Research Theme Grant Assistant Scheme. No member of the research team will receive a personal financial benefit from your involvement in this research project (other than their ordinary wages).

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to complete a short online survey that includes questions about your social networks and experience of isolation and loneliness, as well as housing and neighbourhood experiences, substance use and gambling behaviour, physical wellbeing, and experiences of stigma and discrimination. At the end of the survey, you can indicate your availability to participate in a follow-up interview. You can decide to do only the survey or both the survey and interview.

How much of my time will I need to give?

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The optional interview will take between 30 and 40 minutes to complete.

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

Although the potential benefits of the research outcomes may not be of immediate value to you as individual participants, you will receive a \$10 grocery gift card reimbursement, not as payment for your participation but as compensation for your time. Indirect benefits include improved knowledge regarding the social networks of people experiencing health-related stigma that can be used by research partners to improve service delivery.

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

The study may involve some risk and discomforts such as mild psychological distress. You may feel that some of the questions we ask are stressful or upsetting. If you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go to the next question, or you may stop immediately. If you become upset or distressed because of your participation in the research project, contact a member of the research team or a staff member at the service site to organise for someone to speak with you.

The survey and interview include questions about illicit drug use. Directly answering these questions does not pose any risk as this information is confidential and will not be shared with service providers or any other person. If you choose to participate in the interview, there may be a slight risk of inadvertently disclosing additional information regarding illegal activity associated with this drug use

(e.g. drug distribution, stealing or robbery offences). If this occurs, the researcher will stop the interview and remind you not to disclose any details of illegal activity other than illicit drug use.

How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you will not be identified, except with your permission.

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. However, your data may be used in other related projects for an extended period of time. Your information may be used in similar projects examining social networks and health stigma by other researchers. Any data shared with other researchers will be de-identified meaning all personally identifying information will be stripped from the dataset before being shared.

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 without giving reason.

If you change your mind about participating after you have completed the survey, it will not be possible for you to withdraw from the study. This is because the survey does not collect personal identifiers (like your name or date of birth) and so it will not be possible to know which survey is yours. If you participate in the interview and later decide to withdraw, please contact the Chief Investigator Associate Professor Kate McBride and she can delete your interview data.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the contact details of researcher provided on this sheet. They can contact the Chief Investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain a copy of the information sheet and receive a link to the survey if interested and eligible.

What if I require further information?

Please contact A/Prof Kate McBride should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate.

Name: A/Prof Kate McBride

Position: Chief Investigator

Phone Number: 02 4620 3436

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 H15544.