

**Participant Information Sheet**

**Understanding and Dealing with Stress (DE-STRESS)**

A research project

November 2016 – April 2019

INFORMATION SHEET FOR GP PARTICIPANTS

We are researchers from the University of Exeter and the University of Plymouth. We'd like to invite you to take part in our research study. Joining the study is entirely up to you. Before you decide we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you.

**Why is this research being done?**

This project aims to increase understanding of the factors influencing the uptake of treatments for mental distress in low-income communities. Current government and civil society strategies frame mental distress as a psychological problem that lies within the individual concerned. This not only suggests that such distress can be 'corrected' through medical treatment, but also masks the factors that often underlie the root causes of suffering e.g. poor living conditions, unemployment. At the same time, policies in place to restrict welfare support, and popular media often draw on moralising narratives that promote the idea that people should take responsibility for their actions and circumstances.

This research aims to explore how such narrratives influence responses to mental distress within low-income communities. Attention will be given to understanding: i) the role of moral narratives in influencing decisions to seek medical support for mental distress; ii) how these narratives manifest within GP consultations and influence treatment decisions and patient wellbeing. A key aim of the study is to identify and disseminate what patients consider good consultation practice.

The study has the backing of community members in the study sites and builds on on-going links that the research team have developed within the study sites.

**Study sites:** Devonport, St Budeaux, Barne Barton (Plymouth); Teignmouth

**Who will be in the project?**

This is a qualitative, mixed methods study. The majority of the study is concerned with understanding the experiences of men and women aged 18-65 living in the study sites (obtained via focus groups and interviews).

However, we are also undertaking interviews with GPs who work with populations from the study sites. These interviews will provide us with insight into the ways that you feel moral narratives influence mental distress and responses to it in low-income communities.

**Do you have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide if you want to take part. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form and you will also be given a copy of this. Even if you say ‘yes’, you can drop out at any time, or say that you don't want to answer some questions, and you do not have to give a reason why.

**What will you be asked to do?**

You will be asked to participate in one interview with a member of the research team. This will take approx. 45 minutes and can be held at a time and place that is convenient to you.

**What will happen to the results?**

We aim to publish the findings from this study for use by academics and practitioners. Neither your name nor that of your surgery will be used in any publication or presentation, so no-one will be able to trace the information you give back to you. If you give consent, the anonymised research data will be archived securely with the UK Data Service.

**Confidentiality**

* The research team will not tell anyone else what you say unless we think that someone might be at risk or might be harmed. If so, we will talk to you first about what could be done to help.
* If you agree, we will tape record the interview and type it up later. No-one else will listen to the tapes.
* All data will be securely stored on a password-protected computer that only the research team can access.
* Unless you specifically request otherwise, we will change all names in any reports so no-one else knows who said what. Any personal data will be kept separately from interview transcripts. Neither you nor any people you mention will be able to be identified in any publications or presentations.

**What if you have any questions?**

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact the project lead, Felicity Thomas at [f.thomas@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:f.thomas@exeter.ac.uk) on 01392 724352.

**Complaints**

If you have any complaints about the way in which this study has been carried out please contact the University of Exeter’s Research Ethics and Governance Manager,

Gail Seymour: Email: [G.M.Seymour@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:G.M.Seymour@exeter.ac.uk); Tel: 01392 726621

**Who is organising, funding and ethically reviewing the project?**

The study is organised by Felicity Thomas, Katrina Wyatt and Rose McCabe (Exeter University) and Richard Byng (Plymouth University). It is a 30 month project running from November 2016 to April 2019. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the [state name] Research Ethics Committee.

**Thank you for reading this leaflet**