

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

A research project

November 2016 – April 2019

**Information sheet for interview 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. One of our team will go through this information with you, to help you decide whether or not you would like to take part and answer any questions you may have.

Do ask if anything is unclear, and please feel free to talk to others about the study if you wish.

**Why is this research being done?**

Living with issues such as social isolation, poor quality housing and unemployment can be stressful. The way that people understand and respond to this stress may be influenced by many sources, including friends and family, the media, government policies and service providers.

In this study, we are interested in understanding more about the ways in which people respond to these influences and the ways that treatments for stress influence people’s wellbeing. This will help us to understand how GP responses to stress can be improved to better address people’s needs.

To find out more, we need to listen to people like you, living in Plymouth and Teignmouth.

**Who will be in the project?**

The research is focusing on the experiences of forty women and men aged 18-65 living in west Plymouth (Devonport, Barne Barton and St Budeaux) and in west Teignmouth, who have experienced stress related to issues such as social isolation, unemployment etc.

**Do you have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide if you want to take part. One of the research team will describe the study and go through this information sheet, which you will then be given to keep. 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. This will not affect the standard of care you receive or result in any disadvantage to you.

If you withdraw from the study or in the (unlikely) event that you lose capacity to consent during the study, we will erase all your personal data, but we would like to use the research information you have provided up to your withdrawal. All this information would be anonymised so no-one will be able to identify you.

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

Between now and [date up to 6 months in advance] you will be asked to participate in one or two interviews. These will take the form of a fairly informal conversation.

The first interview will focus on your experiences of stress, and the factors that influenced your decision to see, or not see a GP about this. If you saw a GP, the second interview will focus on your experiences of talking with the GP and how you feel this and any treatment has impacted on your wellbeing. If you did not see a GP, the second interview will focus on understanding why you chose not to do this, as well as the alternative coping strategies/sources of support you used. We may not ask you to do a second interview if all the issues have already been covered, and each interview is voluntary.

Each interview will take approximately 1 hour and will take place at a time and location that is convenient to you.

Some participants will also be invited to record an audio diary of their feelings and experiences. Individual participants will be free to choose how frequently and for how long they participate in this activity.

**Could there be any problems for you if you take part?**

We hope that you will enjoy talking to us. Some people may feel upset when talking about some topics. If this happens, you are in control and can stop talking at any point. If you feel you would like to talk things through with a GP or an accredited counsellor, we can help arrange this.

**Will doing the research help you?**

We cannot promise that the research will help you, but the study will collect ideas to help people in the future by enabling a more detailed understanding of the ways that people understand and respond to stress, and what they consider to be helpful when they see a GP.

We are able to pay child-care expenses for attending the interview. You will also be given a £15 voucher (usable at a number of high street shops e.g. Boots, WHSmith, Iceland) for each interview for your time.

**What will happen to the results?**

We aim to publish the findings from this study so other people working in this area can learn more about people’s understandings and experiences. Your name will not 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, and may be used for training purposes.

**Confidentiality**

* Besides the research team, only the community group or GP who told you about this study will know that you have been involved. 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 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) or on 01392 722820.

**Complaints**

If you have any complaints about the way in which this study has been carried out please contact Felicity Thomas at [f.thomas@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:f.thomas@exeter.ac.uk), or 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, Rose McCabe (Exeter University) and Richard Byng (Plymouth University). It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

All research involving NHS patients is looked at by an independent group of people called a Research Ethics Committee to protect your safety, rights, wellbeing and dignity. This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the [state name] Research Ethics Committee.

**Thank you for reading this leaflet**

