

**Participant Information Sheet**

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

A research project

November 2016 – April 2019

INFORMATION SHEET FOR FOCUS GROUP 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 medical interventions for stress (particularly use of antidepressants) 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 [study site name]

**Who will be in the project?**

The research is focusing on women and men aged 18-65 living in west Plymouth (Devonport, Barne Barton and St Budeaux) and in west Teignmouth.

**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. This is fine, and will not result in any disadvantage to you.

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

You will be asked to come to one informal group discussion with members of the research team and approximately 7 other people in the study site areas.

You will be asked to talk about the factors that influence the ways that stress is understood and responded to in your community. There are no right or wrong answers and you do not have to talk about your own personal experiences. We are just interested in your opinions.

The discussion will take between 1-2 hours and will take place at [location, time, date].

**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. You may feel you are being judged, but this is not our intention. 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.

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

* If you agree, we will video or tape record the discussion and type it up later. No-one else will listen to the tapes/see the video recording.
* 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.
* You can talk to others about what was said at the group discussion, but please do not tell them who said it, or the names of any people they were talking about.

We will not tell anyone 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.

**What if you have any questions?**

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

**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, Rosemarie 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**