**Social Connectedness at University**

**Debrief**

Thank you for participating in this study.

**Study background**

Improving the mental health of university students is a priority in the Higher Education sector. Loneliness is associated with mental ill-health in the general population, and it has been identified as a main cause of mental ill-health in students (McIntyre et al., 2018). Therefore, the Student Mental Health Charter highlights the importance of improving social connectedness at university (Hughes & Spanner, 2019). It is important to improve social connectedness in all students, not just those who experience mental ill-health. This is because social connectedness plays a role in *preventing* the onset of mental ill-health (Kleiber et al., 2018).

**Study rationale**

This study sought to explore students’ experiences of social connectedness, loneliness, and wellbeing at university. We hoped to gain in-depth insights into students’ experiences. Eventually, we would like to use these insights to inform the development of a social campus app for students.

**Anonymity and confidentiality**

Other members of the focus group know that you have participated. However, we asked all focus group members to agree that they will not disclose other participants’ names, and that they will not discuss anything said during the focus group with anyone else afterwards.

Focus groups were audio recorded. The recording will be stored on secure university systems (OneDrive) until it has been transcribed.

All focus group data will be transcribed and anonymised, meaning that we will remove all names and identifiable information (for example, if you happened to mention someone else’s name or the name of the street you live on). Transcription will be done by an external company, but this company will comply with GDPR and university regulations.

Once the recording has been transcribed, it will be destroyed. Anonymised transcriptions will be stored securely on University systems (OneDrive) for ten years in line with University policy. If you would like to withdraw your data after the focus group, please inform the Researcher within two weeks.

We may want to reproduce or publish the data and analysis, including specific quotes from the transcript. We will not publish names or any identifiable information, and it will not be possible to link any of the analysis, or any individual quotes, back to you.

We will also anonymise the information you provided in the Study Sign-up Form by removing your name and email address. We will use this anonymised data in our reports, dissemination, and publications, but it will not be possible to link it back to you. If at any point you wish to withdraw your data, please contact us with your participation code and we will destroy your data. Please note that accepting payment for participation does not negate your right to withdraw your data.

**Questions or concerns**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Researcher, [Researcher name], in the first instance [Researcher’s email address].

If you do not feel that your issue has been adequately resolved, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Dr Sophie Homer: [sophie.homer@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:sophie.homer@plymouth.ac.uk)

If you still do not feel that your issue has been adequately resolved, you can contact the University of Plymouth, Faculty of Health: Medicine, Dentistry, and Human Sciences Ethics Committee at [FOHEthics@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:FOHEthics@plymouth.ac.uk) or on 01752 586992.

**Help or advice**

If you would like help or advice regarding mental health, you should contact your GP. Some other points of contact:

University Student Services: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/services/student-services/counselling>

Mind Mental Health Charity: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) 0300 123 3393

Samaritans: <http://www.samaritans.org/> 116 123

**Claiming your voucher**

The Researcher will now explain how to claim your £10 Amazon voucher. Please note that accepting payment for participation does not negate your right to withdraw your data.

**Thank you very much for taking part**