**Executive Summary for SMARTEN**

**Data Collection Procedure**

Purposeful sampling (n=15) was conducted in accordance with theoretical and pragmatic grounds (Morgan, 2007; Robinson, 2014). The project involved three stages. Stage 1 involved 15 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with CIS who had self-reported experiences of loneliness. Stage 2 continued with a group MBCT workshop attended by the participants from stage 1. Stage 3 ended with three focus groups with a total of 14 participants from the original group recruited. Each stage was conducted online using the virtual platform Zoom. Data collection was primarily conducted in English, though participants were encouraged to use their native language (Mandarin) to respond to accurately convey their thoughts.

For the first stage, the semi-structured interviews comprised of five main sections: cultural and personal understandings of loneliness, exploration of imagery, factors contributing to loneliness, potential coping strategies, and opinions on university support services. The questions developed were initially piloted through mock interviews with the research team and student co-researchers before confirming the final interview schedule. Questions included: “How do you think people understand loneliness in Chinese Culture?” and “How does this image reflect your experiences of loneliness?”.

Once all interviews were completed, the project moved to stage 2 where participants were invited to attend a 2-hour, group MBCT workshop over Zoom, guided by the chief investigator. Alternative arrangements were made for participants who were unable to attend, including the provision of supplementary resources to provide information on MBCT, alongside an audio recording of the workshop session. Participants who were unable to attend were also offered a short, one-to-one meeting with the Chief Investigator to allow equal opportunity to ask questions about the materials. All participants were also encouraged to practice an MBCT exercise from the materials provided, prior to attending the final focus group.

Three focus group sessions were conducted with a total of 14 participants from the first stage. Focus group sizes ranged from 4 to 5 participants, as per recommendations for ensuring optimal group discussion without preventing members from sharing their insight within the available time (Halcomb et al., 2007; Krueger & Casey, 2014). Each focus group was facilitated by 1 or 2 researchers, employing a standardised semi-structured focus group schedule. In the beginning, group rules were set (including confidentiality and respect for other’s opinions) before members were asked to make introductions to build rapport. The questions were created to explore thoughts about MBCT and the potential effectiveness for CIS experiencing loneliness or other negative affects. The chief investigator (XL) moderated all the focus groups. Throughout the sessions, prompts were used to increase the depth of engagement and to acquire more detailed responses. Focus groups lasted between 80 minutes to 115 minutes (M= 96 minutes).

Interviews and focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher or professional transcription service, which were checked for accuracy.