

**Personality Traits and Processing of Social and Emotional Cues**

**Information Sheet**

We are recruiting participants for a research project that aims to understand how personality traits are associated with responses to social and emotional cues depicted in images. We will also ask you some questions about your mental wellbeing, including mood, anxiety and aggression.

Some of the images shown in this study may cause some mild discomfort; they depict hands in potentially painful everyday situations e.g. chopping vegetables with a knife. No actual injury is shown in any of the images. If you would be likely to experience considerable distress in response to such images, then you should not take part. You should also not take part if you feel uncomfortable responding to items about feelings of anxiety or sadness. All participation is voluntary and anonymous. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important that you understand what is involved and why the research is being carried out. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

**What is the research for?**

The study aims to explore how individual differences in personality traits are related to responses to, and the processing of, social and emotional cues.

**Who can take part?**

Anybody can take part who is aged 18 to 60 years, lives in the UK and speaks the English language. You should not take part if you have a neurological condition or brain injury, or if you have used alcohol or other substances on the day of testing. Participants must also have an internet connection and access to an iPad, PC or laptop computer so that they can download the software needed to complete the study. You should not take part if you are likely to experience considerable distress from viewing painful images, or from responding to items about anxiety, mood and aggression.

**Do I have to take part?**

All participation is completely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you can change your mind at any point during the study; you can simply stop completing the study without providing explanation. If you leave the study, any information already provided will not be used in the study. As we will not collect any personally identifiable information, once your responses have been submitted, you will not be able to withdraw them from the study.

**What does the research involve?**

You will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires and a computer response task. Participation will take around 1 hour to complete all study measures. You will first be asked to confirm that you understand what is involved, and whether or not you agree to take part in the study. You will then be asked to provide some simple information about you (for example; age, gender and ethnicity), to response to questionnaire items asking about personality traits and tendencies to think, feel or behave in certain ways. Some items ask about mood and intentional harm or suicidal thoughts. You will also be asked to complete a task that requires you to rate your responses to a number of images on three scales. Some of the questions, cause you to feel distressed. If, at any point, you no longer want to take part in the research, you can stop completing the questionnaire and any information already provided will not be used in the study.

**What are the risks?**

Some questions will ask about feelings of anxiety, feelings of low mood, intentional harm or suicidal thoughts, and aggression. The computer task will require you to view images of emotional facial expressions and hands in everyday situations that could cause injury. You may find some images uncomfortable to look at, but they do not display any actual injury. If you think that responding to such items, or viewing such images, will cause you considerable distress, then you should not take part. If you do feel uncomfortable or distressed while completing the study, please make use of support networks available to you. We will not collect any personally identifiable information about you, including IP addresses, so there is no risk that your responses can be identified to you. As no personally identifiable information is collected, we will be unable to act upon any responses provided, even those pointing to criminal activity.

The research team are unable to offer any clinical advice or guidance on the subjects involved in this study. We have provided web addresses and contact details for relevant helplines, including MIND who offers an information and signposting service for people who are concerned about mental health related issues; and the Samaritans (UK), who offer completely confidential telephone support to anybody who is experiencing distress. This information can be found at the end of this document, and in a separate document following study completion.

We will not ask you to provide, or have access to, any personally identifiable information about you. This means that we are unable to provide individual feedback regarding your results and we will not know who has completed the survey. As no personally identifiable information is collected, we will be unable to act upon any responses provided, even those pointing to criminal activity. If you would like support for your physical or mental health, or if you are concerned about intentional harm or suicidal thoughts, please contact your GP, or contact your nearest Accident and Emergency Services department (or call 111 or 999) if you feel that your own or somebody else’s life is in crisis.

**What are the benefits?**

You will be reimbursed for your time in line with Prolific Academic guidance on participant payments. All participants in the research will provide valuable information to help increase our understanding of the relationship between personality traits and responses to social and emotional cues.

**Is it confidential?**

We will not ask you to provide any personally identifiable information. Although Prolific Academic may keep a record of your participation in this study and hold personally identifiable information about you, data collection will take place on a separate platform (Inquisit) and your responses will not be accessible to Prolific Academic. As no personally identifiable information is collected, we will be unable to act upon any responses provided, even those pointing to criminal activity.

**What will you do with my information?**

Once recruitment is complete, the research team will analyse all anonymous information. The findings from this research will be submitted for publication in relevant, peer reviewed scientific journals. Findings may also be presented during conferences or workshops.

All data will be stored in accordance with the law. Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University’s research. Any queries relating to the handling of your personal data can be sent to the Principal Investigator, Dr Steven Gillespie, who will act as the Data Processor for this study. For more information, please see further information on how my data will be used.

**Can I have a copy of the findings?**

Participants may contact the Principal Investigator, Dr Steven Gillespie, by email to request a summary of the findings following data processing and analysis.

**What if I’m unhappy or there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy with the research, or there is any problem, please let us know by contacting Dr Steven Gillespie (Steven.Gillespie@liverpool.ac.uk) and we will do our best to help.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint that you do not want to come to us with, please contact the Research Governance Officer (ethics@liv.ac.uk). When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

**Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

If you would like any more information about this study, please contact the Principal Investigator, Dr Steven Gillespie, by email (steven.gillespie@liverpool.ac.uk).

**Further information on how my data will be used:**

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| How will my data be collected? | Your data will be collected via an online experiment and questionnaire. We will not ask you to provide any personally identifiable information, so your responses cannot be linked to you. |
| How will my data be  stored? | Data will be stored in accordance with the University's Research Data Management policy. It will remain the responsibility of the data custodian (the Principal Investigator) who will be responsible for the data until it is destroyed in accordance with the University’s Research Data Management. |
| How long will my data  be stored for? | The data custodian will be responsible for the data until it is destroyed after a minimum of 10 years in accordance with the University’s Research Data Management policy. |
| What measures are in  place to protect the  security and  confidentiality of my  data? | The questionnaires are completed anonymously in order to ensure confidentiality and the data collected will be stored in accordance with the University's Research Data Management policy. |
| Will my data be  anonymised? | All data used in the research will be completely anonymous. We will not have access to any personally identifiable information about you. IP addresses will not be recorded as part of your responses. |
| How will my  anonymous data be  used? | The results of the study will be written up for publication in relevant, peer reviewed scientific journals and/or shared at relevant conferences or workshops. The results may also be shared with relevant organisations and networks. Your responses will be anonymous meaning that you cannot be identified by name in any dissemination of the results. |
| Who will have access to my anonymous data? | Dr Steven Gillespie and the Co-Investigators will have access to your data. Anonymous research data may also be made available alongside published articles or as part of a data repository, consistent with best practices in open science. |
| Will my data be  archived for use in  other research  projects in the future? | In line with the University of Liverpool's Data Management Policy, anonymised research data may be made available for sharing and use by other authorised researchers to support future research. |
| How will my data be  destroyed? | The data will be destroyed in accordance with the University’s Research Data Management Policy. |

**MIND**

Infoline: 0300 123 3393; Email: info@mind.org.uk; Text: 86463; Post: Mind Infoline, PO Box 75225, London, E15 9FS

Infoline provides an information and signposting service related to concerns about mental health. It is open 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (except for bank holidays).

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/

**The Samaritans (UK)**

Telephone (24hours a day): 116 123

e-mail (response time: 24 hours): jo@samaritans.org