**Participant Information Sheet**

**Research Question:**

**Exploring Sexuality Knowledge and Experience of Romantic Relationships in Neurodivergent Young People. Perspectives from Young Adults.**

I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Feel free to ask questions or contact me if anything you read is not clear or would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

**What is the main purpose of this study?**

To investigate your perspectives on:

* sexuality education you receive(d) in your school/college
* how useful (or not) this sexuality education was for you in terms of giving you the right tools to know how to navigate romantic relationships
* experiences of your romantic relationships and dating
* your recommendations on support or interventions that would be beneficial in terms of improving (if necessary) the existing sexuality education

**Why have I been invited?**

You are an individual between 18-25 years old who is neurotypical (has not been diagnosed with any neurodevelopmental conditions) or has a diagnosis of ASD or ADHD or ASD co-occurring with ADHD.

A total of 10-12 young people will be invited to participate in the semi-structured interviews per each of the subgroup (ASD, ADHD, ASD co-occurring with ADHD, NT).

**Do I have to take part?**

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary hence you can decide whether you would like to participate in it or not. Note, you are free to withdraw from the research within three weeks from the completion of the semi-structured interview. After three weeks, the data analysis will have begun and no removal from the study will be possible. You may request the withdrawal from the study by notifying the researcher about it via the university email. Any data collected from you will be removed from the researcher’s files.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

The study involves participating in a semi-structured interview, which means the researcher will be asking you open-ended questions on the research topic (e.g., I would like to start by learning a bit about your experiences with relationship and sex education…Do/Did you have a relationship and sex education in your school/college? (If you did not have a relationship and sex education in your school/college, who/what places provide/provided you with relationship and sex education?)/ How useful is/was the relationship and sex education you receive/received in terms of giving you the right tools and information for building and maintaining romantic relationships?).

The semi-structured interview may last around 30-60 minutes. You will be asked around ten open questions regarding the research topic.

The semi-structured interview will be conducted online via Microsoft Teams (however, you may choose to keep the camera off during the recording) or over the phone. You will be given the opportunity to decide which of these two options you would prefer. On the semi-structured interview day, the researcher will describe in detail the purpose of this study and you will be informed about your rights under the British Psychological Society’s Code of Ethics. Prior to the semi-structured interview, you will be asked to sign the consent form and give some very brief background information on your demographics (e.g., your age, gender); you will be asked to send this information via email to the researcher.

The semi-structured interview will be recorded either online via Microsoft Teams or on a Dictaphone if conducted over the phone. As soon as possible, after the completion of the semi-structured interview, the recordings will be transferred into the researcher’s private computer with a password to access it, as well as on the University One Drive, which will be available only to the researcher. The researcher’s supervisors will be the only other people who will be given access to this data if requested. Subsequently, all the recorded data will be deleted from Microsoft Teams recording and the Dictaphone.

**What are the disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

This project may include highly sensitive questions, thus there is a risk of feeling distressed or uncomfortable. You may request to pause or stop the semi-structured interview at any point if you feel distressed or too uncomfortable to continue. A list of independent support services is given at the bottom of this sheet in case you would need professional assistance.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The researcher cannot promise the study will help you, however, your participation will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of sexuality education for young individuals with and without ASD, ADHD, and ASD co-occurring with ADHD. This may benefit mental health services, health education and the criminal justice system, as well as the individuals themselves.

**What if there is a problem?**

Should you have any concerns about the research, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher (xxx) and she will do her best to answer your questions.

Alternatively, you may contact the supervisory team: xxx (xxx), xxx (xxx). Complaints should be addressed to Professor xxx Chair of the Health Research Ethical Approval Panel, xxx E: [xxx](mailto:a.clark@salford.ac.uk)

**Will my part in the study will be kept confidential?**

It will be ensured that all data and information provided during the semi-structured interview will be strictly confidential and the privacy of the participants will be respected according to the Data Protection Act 1988 and The University of xxx General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). However, the researcher will have grounds for disclosure to the police in exceptional circumstances under which there appears to be sufficient evidence to raise a concern about your safety; the safety of other persons who may be endangered by your behaviour; or the health, welfare, or safety of children or vulnerable adults. The above is under section 1.2 (vi) of the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009). Additionally, the researcher will keep your name on the list and will assign a number to it, which will be known only to the researcher and which will ensure that your identity remains confidential. All collected data will be stored on the researcher’s private computer, which is protected by a password known only to the researcher, as well as on the University One Drive. The researcher’s supervisory team will be the only other people who will be given access to this data if requested. All data stored on the researcher’s private computer, as well as on the University One Drive, will remain confidential and nothing will be published that would enable anyone to identify you. Additionally, the collected data will be stored in the Data Archive\* United Kingdom (UK).

**What will happen if I don’t carry on with the study?**

You are free to withdraw from the semi-structured interview within three weeks of completing it. You may request the withdrawal from the study by notifying the researcher about it via the university email. Your data will be removed and not included in any disseminated output. There will not be any further consequences due to your removal.

**What will happen to the results of the study?**

The results of the study will be used to complete the research question and write a PhD dissertation. Additionally, results might be shared in conference presentations and journal articles.

All your data will remain confidential, and nothing will be published that would enable anyone to identify you. The results will be seen by the supervisors. If you wish to see the results, you will be able to do so on the completion of the research. You will need to contact the researcher via their university email address and request a copy of the results.

**Who has reviewed the project?**

The research project has been reviewed and approved by the Research, Enterprise and Engagement Ethical Approval Panel.

**Further information and contact details:**

Should you require any further information please contact the primary researcher:

xxx, email: [xxx](mailto:M.P.Smusz@edu.salford.ac.uk)

**Alternatively, you may contact the supervisory team:**xxx

xxx

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| **The List of Independent Support Organisations in the UK** |
| **National Autistic Society Manchester:**  <https://www.autism.org.uk/services/england/manchester.aspx>  email: [supportercare@nas.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@nas.org.uk).  tel.nr: 0808 800 4104. or: 0808 800 1050 |
| **CABA Helping People with Autism:**  <https://www.caba.org.uk/help-and-guides/information/support-people-autism>  email:  [enquiries@caba.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@caba.org.uk)  tel.nr: [+44 (0) 1788 556 366](tel:01788556366) |
| **UKAP The UK ADHD Partnership:**  <https://www.ukadhd.com/what-is-ukap.htm>  email: [addup@addup.co.uk](mailto:addup@addup.co.uk) |
| **MADDchester:**  <http://www.maddchester.com/>  email*:* [contact@maddchester.com](mailto:contact@maddchester.com) |
| **Young Minds:**  [YoungMinds - children and young people's mental health charity](https://youngminds.org.uk/)  Call for free on 0808 802 5544 (9:30am - 4pm, Mon - Fri) |
| **Mental Health UK:**  [Supporting young people - Mental Health UK (mentalhealth-uk.org)](https://mentalhealth-uk.org/support-and-services/supporting-young-people/)  Tel. Nr [0121 522 7007](tel:0121%20522%207007) (10am-4pm Mon-Fri (excluding bank holidays) |
| **Brook: your free & confidential sexual health & wellbeing experts:**  [Brook – Healthy lives for young people](https://www.brook.org.uk/)  [Victim Support](https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/) call 0800 123 6600 / [online chat](https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat) (all-age) |
| **Relate (the relationship people):**  [Help for Children & Young People – Family & Relationship Help | Relate](https://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-children-and-young-people)  [Contact us | Relate](https://www.relate.org.uk/about-us/contact-us) |
| **SupportLine is particularly aimed at those who are isolated, at-risk, vulnerable and victims of any form of abuse:**  Helpline: 01708 765200 (hours vary so ring for details) Admin: 01708 765222 Email: [info@supportline.org.uk](mailto:info@supportline.org.uk) |
| **Manchester City Council: Sexual Health:**  [Sexual health | Sexual health | Manchester City Council](https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/200048/health_and_wellbeing/6084/sexual_health)  To report abuse, neglect, or a vulnerable person at risk:  0161 234 5001 |
| [**Fresh4Manchester**](https://www.fresh4manchester.nhs.uk/)**:**  [Home - Fresh4Manchester](https://www.fresh4manchester.nhs.uk/)  CALL US NOW ON 0161 701 1555 |
| **STOP IT NOW; Helping Prevent Child Sexual Abuse**:  <https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/>  Tel.nr: 0808 1000 900  *STOP IT NOW is a charity in the UK that offers information and support for individuals who may have experience of illegal online sexual behaviour involving children (e.g., any type of pornography) and who would like to receive support for how to change these behaviours. The charity also provides support for families and friends and of these individuals; additionally, it helps people cope with difficult emotions and the professionals who work with these groups.* |

\* The UK Data Archive is a national centre of expertise in data archiving in the United Kingdom. It houses the largest collection of digital data in the social sciences and humanities in the UK. It is certified under the Data Seal of Approval as a trusted digital repository (<https://www.data-archive.ac.uk/>).