

## Participant Information Sheet For 12-step recovery group members

### **Can digital technologies help support mental health and reduce inequalities in mental health recovery in rural areas?**

You are invited to take part in a research project that aims to inform the development of a digital resource to support mental health recovery in rural areas. This research is being carried out by a PhD research student from the Digital Health & Rural Health and Wellbeing department of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). The researcher is also a member of a 12-step recovery (TSR) group.

### **Why am I being invited?**

You are being invited to participate because you live in a remote, rural or semi-rural area of the Highlands and Islands or Moray and have over 12 months in recovery, are a member of a TSR home group and have accessed recovery meetings in both the real world and online. Your contribution to this research will be extremely valuable in uncovering the challenges and benefits of using technology to access group recovery meetings. This information sheet describes the study and explains what you will be asked to do if you decide to take part.

### **What is the research about?**

TSR group members have access to a vital resource in their recovery - the sharing of experience, strength and hope with each other in local and 'virtual' group meetings. However, people with experience of mental and emotional distress, including those with chronic physical illness, and who live in remote and rural areas, like the Highlands, have no comparable resource in the real-world or online. The aims of this research are:

- to contribute to the development of a digital resource to help reduce inequalities and support mental health recovery in rural Highlands and Islands.
- to bring the lived experience of people who have used real world and online TSR meetings into the research and development of a digital resource for mental health recovery in rural areas.

*This study is not about the content of TSR group members' 'shares' but it is about the lived experience of accessing recovery meetings in virtual 'rooms' instead of real-world rooms. The aim is to explore experiences, similarities and differences, accessibility and challenges found in these two ways of sharing with peers in recovery.*

### **What will taking part involve?**

- A video or telephone interview with the PhD researcher for approximately one hour which will be recorded over WebEx video-conferencing platform, approved for use by the University of the Highlands and Islands. The recordings are for research purposes only and will not at any time be made publicly available.

- You will be encouraged to describe your experience of using technologies like Zoom or Skype to access recovery meetings.
- You will be invited to share how the tools available through 12-step recovery may have influenced your ability to cope with physical distancing and other COVID-19 related restrictions.
- You do not have to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with.
- You do not need to have knowledge about technology or experience of mental health issues.
- if you decide to participate, please sign and scan or photograph the attached Consent Form and return by email to the PhD researcher - [noreen.grant@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:noreen.grant@uhi.ac.uk) (or a stamped, addressed envelope can be provided if required). Noreen will then contact you to arrange the interview.

### **What are the benefits and risks of taking part?**

There is no guarantee of any direct benefits to participants by taking part in this study. However, your expertise and contribution may bring an indirect benefit to you as it will help inform the development of a digital resource that can deliver benefits to others. We do not foresee any risks to you in taking part. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the interview at any point without giving a reason.

### **What will happen to the information I share?**

The data collected from the interview will be transcribed into text for the purpose of this research. Transcription of interviews will be anonymised and subject to analysis by the PhD researcher in order to learn from your experience of attending real-world and online TSR group meetings. The anonymised findings will be reported in the UHI researcher's PhD thesis and may be used in conference presentations and published in peer reviewed academic journals. However, your contribution will remain anonymous, and you will not be identified in any way as an individual. In the preparation of these academic publications, your anonymised conversational transcripts may be viewed by other academics within the UHI Department of Digital Health and Rural Health and Wellbeing.

### **What will happen to my data?**

Interviews will be recorded via UHI WebEx Meetings video-conferencing platform and you can select to be recorded on audio and video or audio only.

Audio/video files and associated anonymised transcriptions will be kept within a secure area of UHI SharePoint system accessible only to the UHI PhD researcher. These documents will be subject to the UHI research data retention policy. Direct quotations from participants used in any reporting of this research will have identifying characteristics such as name, gender, age and place of residence removed. Results will be reported in an aggregated format and any quotes will be attributed to stakeholder type rather than individual participants.

## What if I have questions about the study?

Please contact [noreen.grant@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:noreen.grant@uhi.ac.uk) with any enquiries about this research.

**PhD Researcher:** Noreen Grant (BSc), Digital Health & Rural Health and Wellbeing Department, Centre for Health Science, Inverness.

**Director of Studies and PhD Student Supervisor:** Dr Mark Grindle, Digital Health & Rural Health and Wellbeing Department, Centre for Health Science, Inverness.

**Date:** August 2020.

## Further Contact details:

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet. If you have any questions/concerns, before or after the research interview you can contact Noreen or if you wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed please contact:

UHI Research Ethics Committee (REC), Faculty Research Ethics Officer, University of the Highlands and Islands, 12b Ness Walk, Inverness, IV3 5SQ

Telephone: 01463 279347

Email: [research.ethics@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@uhi.ac.uk)

## Notes on Data Protection

The legal reason for using the data you provide is that it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest i.e., the delivery of research undertaken by a university. Where collected, the legal reason for using special category (sensitive) data is that it will be processed for scientific or historical research purposes in the public interest.

The data controller for this research is Noreen Grant. For any data protection enquiries, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer by email: [dataprotectionofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@uhi.ac.uk)

All identifying information will be removed from the transcript of your conversation. This includes, for example, any mentions of your name, age and place of residence. The data will not be sent outside the EU. The anonymized transcripts will be stored on the University's secure SharePoint system and will be kept for ten years from the end of the project.

The following are your rights in respect of this data processing:

- The right to access your personal data
- The right to rectification if the personal data we hold about you is incorrect
- The right to restrict processing of your personal data
- The right to request erasure (deletion) of your personal data
- The right to data portability

You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office about our handling of your data.

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