



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID STANDARDS PROJECT: Depression or Psychosis

INFORMATION SHEET FOR CARERS

What is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional treatment is received or until the crisis resolves. The MHFA training program was developed in 2000 by Professor Tony Jorm and Ms Betty Kitchener in an attempt to provide basic knowledge to people on how to help someone who is experiencing mental health difficulties (see www.mhfa.com.au for more details). The course has been very well-received by the Australian public and has now been taught in Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and in the state of New York.

What is the aim of this project?

This project will produce general standards to guide Mental Health First Aid provided by members of the public. These standards will be applied in training courses for the public.

Who is conducting the research?

The research is being conducted by ORYGEN Research Centre at the University of Melbourne.

How is the research being funded?

The research project is funded by a National Health and Medical Research Council grant.

What will the research involve?

You are invited to be an expert panel member for the development of the depression or psychosis standards. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Complete a questionnaire via the internet which asks you to rate the whether certain actions should be included in the Mental Health First Aid standards for depression or psychosis. (If you are unable to access the internet, we will provide a paper version of the questionnaire)
2. You may be asked to rate the statements again after you have seen a summary of the ratings given by other panel members, as the aim of the project is to achieve consensus about the best way to help someone who may have depression or a psychotic disorder. You can choose to maintain or change your original ratings.
3. Depending on the level of consensus achieved, several rounds of this process may be required.
4. Provide any comments on a draft of the standards.

Please note that the expert panel will never meet face-to-face. All tasks will be completed individually in your own time. We expect that the questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. We estimate the total time commitment for this project to be approximately one hour.

What if I change my mind?

Participation in this project is voluntary. If you change your mind about participating, you are free to withdraw from the project at any time and you may also withdraw your data if you wish.

Who is being asked to participate?

We are inviting people to participate as panel members if they have expertise in depression or psychosis. The panel members will be drawn from Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the USA and Canada. There are three categories of panel members:

1. Clinicians who have professional experience in the area of depression or psychosis;
2. Consumers who have personally experienced depression or psychosis;
3. Carers of people who have experienced depression or psychosis.

What about privacy?

Any data we collect from you will be held under password protection and not divulged to others. We are interested in the consensus views of the panel, rather than the views of individual members. We will only present the results in statistical summary form.

Are there any risks?

We do not know of any risks of participation in this study.

What are the benefits?

This project has the potential to lead to better community support for people with mental health problems by providing guidance to Mental Health First Aid training programs. The Mental Health First Aid standards developed by this project will be relevant internationally for English-speaking countries and will be implemented in a range of training courses.

How can I get further information?

If you would like further information before deciding to participate, please contact Robyn Langlands, email: robynla@unimelb.edu.au, phone: +61-3-9342 3768.

What if I have concerns about the project?

If you have concerns about the *scientific aspects of the study*, please contact the coordinator of the project, Robyn Langlands, email: robynla@unimelb.edu.au, phone: +61-3-9342 3768 or Professor Tony Jorm, email: ajorm@unimelb.edu.au, phone: +61-3-9342 3747.

If you have concerns about the *ethics of the study*, please contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, phone: +61-3-8344 2073, fax: +61-3-9347 6739.