GU ref no: 2020/842

Information sheet for participants

Mental Health Promotion and Intervention in Occupational Settings

You are invited to take part in a research study aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing (and reducing stigma surrounding mental health) in the workplace. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask us if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

What is the project about?

Depression and anxiety are the most common mental health difficulties in the workplace in Australia. Those working in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are particularly vulnerable. However, most SMEs have limited capacity to promote mental health and provide supportive interventions to staff. The project aims to improve mental health and wellbeing and reduce depression and suicidal thoughts in the employees and employers of SMEs in Europe and Australia.

What is the aim of the study?

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of intervention in SMEs in nine countries. This study will help to obtain information on the standard and intensity of carrying out of the interventions, as well as information on the perspectives and experiences of employees and employers who engaged with the intervention. This study will include employees and employers of SMEs in the heath, construction and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sectors as these sectors have been identified as having an increased risk of mental health difficulties. Considering the long-term impacts on people in general, especially people with existing mental health issues, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, this project is extremely timely.

What would taking part in the project mean for me?

This study involves conducting a randomised clinical trial where those completing the intervention are compared to a group who do not complete the intervention. A brief introductory session, organised by the Lead Investigator and Research Officer in your area, will take place, to tell you about the study, to answer any questions you may have and to show you how to sign up to participate in the study. Once you sign up to participate, you and your organisation will be assigned to one of two groups: (1) the intervention group who will be offered an online, evidence based mental health intervention or (2) the waitlist group who will be offered the online intervention after a period of thirteen months on the waitlist. All participants will eventually gain access to the online intervention.

Before gaining access to the intervention (or starting the wait period), you will be requested to complete a survey. This survey will assess wellbeing, burnout, depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation, and help seeking behaviour. You will also be asked to questions such as your gender, age and marital status. Important information related to your work, relationship, family, health, and mental health will also be collected. This survey will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. You will be asked to complete surveys on two more occasions: nine months and thirteen months following the first survey. Completing surveys at these timepoints will help us

to identify any changes experienced during the period of this intervention. You will also have the opportunity to discuss your views on the interventions in an online focus group with others who completed the pilot interventions.

How will I benefit from participating in this research?

The interventions being offered are evidence based, and therefore it is expected to be beneficial for individuals with or without a clinically relevant mental health issue. Based on the use of evidence-based interventions, it is anticipated that benefits experienced by participants may include a reduction in stress, burnout, depressive and anxiety symptoms, as well as potentially reducing stigma related to mental (ill) health. The study is expected to improve your overall mental health, which in turn will have significance on your overall wellbeing and work performance.

In previous projects, the interventions being offered in this study, have been shown to have beneficial effects on mental health without any negative effects. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there will be any negative effects for participants.

Considering the short-term and long-term impacts of COVID-19, including staff stress and anxiety, reduced quality and perhaps intensity of care for those with mental disorders, or other impacts associated with the COVID-19-crisis, the project is timely while it offers to SMEs support and intervention tools with a specific focus on alleviating depression and anxiety among staff.

However, some questionnaire items will address depression and anxiety as well as suicidal thoughts. This may be distressing for some participants. If you become distressed, please contact one or all of the numbers provided here for free anonymous access to counselling supports.

Lifeline Australia – 131114

BeyondBlue Support Service – 1300 22 4636

Mensline Australia – 1300 78 99 78

Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467

MATES in Construction Support Line – 1300 642 111

Alternatively, you may wish contact your local GP or consult the APS website to find a psychologist in your area (https://www.psychology.org.au/Find-a-Psychologist).

How will my information be used?

The information you provide will be used to understand mental health and wellbeing and the factors that shape mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. We will study the questionnaire data to see if the interventions have been beneficial. The results of this pilot study will be used to make appropriate changes in questionnaires and/or interventions for the larger trial.

Findings from the study will be published in academic journals and other sources such as social media and news bulletins. Findings will be reported on all data collected, not single individual data, and those completing data analysis will not have access to participants' names. Participants will be de-identified. A plain language summary of the research results can be requested from the lead investigator at the end of the project, via email (see below).

Will my participation in this project be kept confidential?

The core project team will know that you are participating. Additionally, some parts of the project may take place at your workplace (e.g., an intro session, and workshops). However, questionnaires will not ask identifying information (e.g., your name, address etc) and will be

kept separate. Data will be stored in line with national and European data protection laws. Computer records will be password protected and stored using the GU Research storage platform (as recommended and supported by the University). All data will be stored for a period of 5 years and will then be destroyed. Any information you provide will only be used for this project. If you would like to access your information or if you would like your information to be deleted at any time you can contact the research team through the contact details below.

Possible alternatives

Participation is voluntary. You can choose not to participate without giving a reason and without experiencing any negative consequences. Deciding to withdraw from the project will in no way affect your employment and it is possible to withdraw by contacting Dr Ross, using the contact details below.

Who is organising and funding this project?

The project is being conducted by an international research team led by Professor Ella Arensman, Chief Scientist, National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF), Ireland. The Australian study will be led by Dr Victoria Ross, Chief Investigator, Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention The project is being funded by NHMRC EU Collaborative Research Projects 2020-2024 and the European Commission, Horizon 2020.

The ethical conduct of this research

The GU ethics reference number for this project is 2020/842. Griffith University conduct research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of this research project you should contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Research Ethics to (07) 3735 4375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Legal Privacy Statement

Griffith University requires the following privacy statement to be included in this information sheet. The conduct of this research involves the collection, access, storage and/or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes, including publishing openly (e.g. in an open access repository). However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at:

http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan or telephone (07) 3735 4375.

Additional information

If you have any questions concerning this research, please contact the Chief Investigator (Australia) listed below. This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Griffith University. If you have further queries concerning your rights in connection with the research, you can contact HREC at research-ethics@griffith.edu.au

More information about the project is available from:

Dr Victoria Ross, Chief Investigator (Australia)
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