

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you want to take part or not, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. You can contact me to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

1. What is the purpose of this study?

The overall aim of the project is to evaluate the impact of using Group Analysts and / or Groupwork Practitioners to facilitate self-practice / self-reflective (SPSR) groups on a Pg. Dip. Training course for high intensity cognitive behaviour therapists.

We will measure changes in students' level of specific relational skills (i.e., interpersonal effectiveness, collaboration and eliciting appropriate emotional expression) in standardised role plays using observation of video recordings and assessment using the Cognitive Therapy Rating Scale-Revised (CTS-R) (Blackburn et al., 2001).

The main secondary outcome is change in students' self-rated level of self-awareness (Oden et al., 2009). Other outcomes which will be measured are students' experience of training (Ramsden, 1991), change in their level of perceived stress (Cohen et al., 1983), and change in their self-rated confidence in using relational skills in everyday practice.

2. Why have I been asked to take part in this study?

You have been accepted to train as a Cognitive Behaviour Therapist on the Pg. Dip. programme at Teesside University. Therefore, you are eligible to take part in this study.

3. Do I have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary, and no-one is obliged to take part.

4. What will I have to do if I take part?

At induction, all students will be given Chapter 3: 'Guidance for Participants' from *Experiencing CBT from the Inside Out: A Self-Practice/Self-Reflection (SPSR) Workbook for Therapists* (Bennett-Levy et al., 2014). They will be invited to attend an information-giving session with other potential participants to find out about the study. You will be able to ask questions about the study face-to-face in a group or in a 1:1 meeting with one of the Lead Researcher/s who is not employed by Teesside University (Davy de Geeter). You will be sent a consent form by email, and you will be able to opt in by signing the form in your own time and at home if desired with time to consider and to consult with others about whether to take part or not. If you agree to be included in the research, you can sign the online Consent Form by clicking on the submit button.

During the induction week, all students will be asked to record a 30-minute role play using a standardised patient with a mental health problem. Recording role plays is a normal practice during training. Only recordings by students who have consented to take part in the study will be assessed by an independent BABCP accredited Cognitive Behaviour Therapist. This process will be repeated approximately one year later.

You will be asked to express a preference regarding the most convenient day and time for you to join an SPSR group. We will assign students to different groups based on their preference. Each SPSR group will comprise a mix of students who have given informed consent to take

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part and those who have not. The group facilitator will not know which student is a participant of the study unless individual students inform them.

The groups are for students to reflect on their personal practice of CBT based on six modules from the SPSR workbook which you will have online access to (Bennett-Levy et al., 2014). The SPSR groups will be facilitated by Group Analysts or Groupwork Practitioners approved by the Institute of Group Analysis. The SPSR groups will start after the Easter break and will meet six times during the training programme. Announcements will be made at least one week before each group session to prompt students to complete the specific SPSR exercise timetabled for that group.

During the induction week, only participants in the research study will be asked to complete the baseline online questionnaires, and they will be asked to complete online questionnaires four more times during the training programme. Completion of questionnaires will take approximately ½ hour i.e., an additional demand of 2½ hours of their own study time over 12 months for research participants only.

5. What will happen if I don't want to take part or if I don't want to carry on with it?

Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be involved if you do not want to. You may also quit at any time up until the end of the data collection process. Participation, non-participation, or withdrawal will have no effect on your training now or in the future.

6. What will happen when the research comes to an end?

At the end of the data collection process, the data will be analysed to evaluate the impact of using Group Analysts and / or Groupwork Practitioners to facilitate self-practice / self-reflective groups in a Pg. Dip. Training course for high intensity cognitive behaviour therapists.

7. What will happen to the results of the study?

The results will be submitted as a written outcome and evaluation summary for IGA members and external organisations. Findings may also be written up for publication, professional meetings, and conference presentations. Your identity will always be protected.

8. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

In order to maintain safe psychological boundaries and to minimise the potential risks of sharing personal information in group sessions, you are advised to respect other students' privacy, anonymity, and rights to confidentiality, and not to discuss issues raised by another student outside of sessions without that person's clear consent. All students will also be asked to agree to ground rules which outline these expectations. You need to be aware that other members of the group will hear what you say, and it is possible that they could tell someone else. Therefore, it cannot be guaranteed that what you say will remain absolutely confidential. However, all students are student members of the British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP) and are bound by the BABCP ethical code and/or a statutory regulator.

We will use a unique ID number (e.g., 123-456) which cannot identify your name to anyone outside Teesside University. Only members of the research team will have access to your personal information on a "need-to-know" basis.

You will be asked to use your ID number and not to write your name on any study materials. All information collected about you during the course of the research will have your name and

personal details removed so that you cannot be recognised. Your personal information will be kept strictly confidential (except where there are serious safeguarding concerns).

Data in the form of online consent forms will be temporarily stored on the Microsoft (MS) Forms server. The forms will be exported as a Microsoft (MS) Excel spreadsheet and stored on the university's password protected server in a folder on the U drive, which is only accessible to the research team. At this point, the data temporarily stored on the Microsoft Forms server will be permanently deleted. Lead Researchers Nicola Walker and Bernie Gibson have undertaken Teesside University's mandatory training in information governance and information security and will handle personal data in a responsible way in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Data in the form of video recordings of role plays do not involve real clients. Recordings will be anonymised and stored on a Microsoft Teams site only accessible by the research team and the independent assessors.

Data in the form of online questionnaires will be anonymised by asking participants to use their unique ID number in the 'name' field. Once completed, the questionnaires will be temporarily stored on the Microsoft (MS) server. Each completed questionnaire will be checked to find out whether any identifiable or sensitive information is included. If so, the form will be anonymised by removing this data and then the questionnaire will be exported as a Microsoft (MS) Excel spreadsheet and stored on the university's password protected server in a folder on the U drive, which is only accessible to the research team. At this point, participant's data temporarily stored on the Microsoft Forms server will be permanently deleted.

In unusual cases the Lead Researcher/s may be required (for up to 5 years after your last contact with Teesside University) to release identifiable information related to your course of study if ordered to do so by a court of law.

The Group Analysts and / or Groupwork Practitioners have an obligation to break confidentiality should you disclose that you or others are at risk of harm. In these circumstances, they will inform the Lead Researcher/s who will take appropriate action to safeguard you, clients, or others.

Any breach of confidentiality will almost always be done with your knowledge unless to do so involves increased risk. Depending on the risks disclosed, the Lead Researcher/s might have to share information with the participant's clinical supervisor, line manager, professional regulatory body, the police, and/or safeguarding services.

9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Participating in SPSR groupwork has the potential to improve students' relational skills and self-awareness. It is hoped that by doing so students will have a better experience on the course and will report less perceived stress. The SPSR model works to support development of the "personal self" and the "therapist self" (Chigwedere et al., 2019) through two interrelated processes called "self-practice" and "self-reflection" whereby the practitioner practises CBT strategies on themselves and then reflects on how their thoughts, feelings and behaviour interact (Bennett-Levy et al., 2014). In previous studies, SPSR has been shown to be acceptable to students (Chigwedere et al., 2021), and to have several positive effects on students (Scott et al., 2021).

Benefits of participating include a potentially positive impact on patients. Some students may be motivated by an altruistic desire to contribute to better training in psychotherapy because this may indirectly improve patients' care and treatment in the long-term (Khatamian Far, 2018).

10. What are the possible side effects/risks/disadvantages of taking part?

Some people find taking part in groupwork difficult and distressing. There is the potential to be disturbed by hearing about other members' experiences, or to become involved in disagreements or conflict. The Group Analysts and / or Groupwork Practitioners who will be co-facilitating the SPSR groups are aware of the need to support members to manage their discussions in a constructive manner.

In addition, it is possible that you may feel embarrassed by completing the self-awareness questionnaire. However, questions about how one thinks and feels are routine in the training of psychotherapists. The questionnaire has recently been used in a similar study evaluating the impact of using SPSR with trainees and no adverse events were reported (Scott et al. 2021).

All students will complete a self-care and safety plan before the groupwork begins. Support will be offered by a member of staff not directly involved in the project (i.e., Angela Dingwall) if a student is distressed or destabilised by doing any of the exercises. All students will have access to student services if they need more support.

11. What if there is a problem or something goes wrong?

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the research, we will do our best to resolve them with you informally. If you are not satisfied, or wish to make a formal complaint, you can do so by contacting the Chair of the Health Research Ethics Sub-Committee: Professor Meez Islam.

12. Expenses and Payments

All students who consent to take part will receive a small gift (i.e., a free copy of the SPSR workbook or a voucher for £25). The gift is designed to incentivise participation without leading anyone to do something to which they would normally have real objections based on risk or other fundamental values. We estimate that the value of the gift is proportionate to the level of burdens involved and/or (justified) risk. You can claim the gift after you have provided your baseline data (i.e., completed questionnaires and recorded a role play video).

13. Who has reviewed the study?

All research proposals are considered by an independent group of people called a Research Ethics Committee to protect participants' interests. This study has received a favourable opinion by Teesside University's Health Research Ethics Committee.

14. Who is organising and funding the research?

We are organising the research as the Course Leader (Bernie Gibson) and as a Lecturer in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (Nicola Walker) on the post graduate diploma in CBT at Teesside University, and as a High Intensity Therapist and Groupwork Practitioner at Impact on Teesside (Davy de Geeter). The research is being funded by the Institute of Group Analysis Legacy Fund.

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15. Why are we conducting this research?

We are conducting this research as part of ongoing efforts to improve the course in response to students' feedback and in response to emerging evidence of the benefits of SPSR to student and qualified therapists.

16. Travel expenses:

Teesside University does not cover travel or car parking expenses.

17. Privacy notice

Please read the Privacy Notice for research participants at Teesside University which tells you why we need to collect personal information about you, what we will do with it, and how we will look after it. www.tees.ac.uk/sections/research/personal_data.cfm. It also tells you about your legal rights in relation to your Personal Data. If you have any questions about this privacy notice, please contact Lead Researcher Nicola Walker.

18. How do I contact you?

If you would like to take part in the study or if you have any questions, problems or wish to get more information at any point, please contact me.

Nicola Walker, Lecturer in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

Email: n.walker@tees.ac.uk Phone: 07469 77 60 70

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