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Using stories of lived experience of mental health to change mental health stigma and help seeking

Submission date
21/03/2025

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
03/04/2025

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
23/07/2026

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[X] Results
[ ] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
A contact-based intervention is one where individuals share their lived experience of mental health difficulties and recovery. These types of interventions have the potential to reduce stigma. The current study examines the effectiveness of a brief (8-minute) digitised contact-based intervention in reducing mental health stigma and improving help-seeking intentions in young adults.

Who can participate?
Undergraduate psychology students enrolled at Macquarie University

What does the study involve?
The intervention comprises a brief video (8 minutes) of a mental health consumer sharing their lived experience of mental health difficulties and their recovery. Measures of public and self-stigma and help-seeking attitudes will be collected before, immediately after, and 1 week following the contact-based intervention, compared to active control. Participants will be invited to participate in a subsequent semi-structured interview that further explores their perspectives on the contact-based intervention.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The benefits of participating include the receipt of psychoeducation about health conditions. The questions and procedures are unlikely to cause distress but in the unlikely event that this does occur, the contact details of the Chief Investigator will be made available.

Where is the study run from?
University of New South Wales, Australia

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
September 2020 to March 2025

Who is funding the study?
The data collection and execution of this study were investigator-initiated and funded. The project team will receive funding from Batyr Australia to assist with the publication costs of the study.

Who is the main contact?
Prof Jennie Hudson, jennie.hudson@unsw.edu.au

Contact information

Type(s)
Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

Contact name
Prof Jennifer Hudson

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
Effectiveness of a brief digitized contact-based intervention in improving mental health stigma and help-seeking in young adults

Study objectives
The intervention group would experience a greater reduction in both public and self-stigma, and greater improvements in help-seeking intentions (using formal and informal sources of help), relative to the active control group, and these effects would be maintained at 1-week follow-up. In addition, it was hypothesized that individuals experiencing high mental health distress would perceive mental health stigma differently and find the intervention more beneficial, compared to individuals with low mental health distress.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
1. Approved 01/03/2021, Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Macquarie University (Balaclava rd, Sydney, 2109, Australia; +61 0298508711; humanethics@mq.edu.au), ref: 52021904124875

2. Approved 09/12/2024, University of New South Wales Human Ethics Committee (Hospital Rd, Randwick, 2035, Australia; -; humanethics@unsw.edu.au), ref: iRECS7757

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Randomized controlled trial

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
This study is not focused on a specific disease or health condition. The related outcome is mental health stigma and helpseeking.

Interventions
Contact-based interventions involve individuals sharing their lived experience of mental health difficulties and recovery. Exposure to lived experience stories has in the past been shown to be effective in reducing stigma. This study is interested in examining the effectiveness of exposure to one brief digitized story of lived experience in reducing mental health stigma and improving help-seeking intentions in young adults. Data will be collected from university students at three time points (baseline, post-intervention, 1-week follow-up) to evaluate the effectiveness of a brief digitized contact-based intervention in reducing mental health stigma and improving help-seeking intentions in young adults. Participants were randomly allocated to condition via random number generation facilitated by the Qualtrics survey platform.

Two education programs will be delivered. Participants allocated to the active intervention group will view one video (8 minutes) of a mental health consumer sharing their lived experience of mental health difficulties, specifically relating to anxiety and depression, and their recovery. These videos were provided by batyr and are being delivered as part of their mental health stigma intervention, the batyr@uni program. One video (8 minutes) of a mental health consumer sharing their lived experience of mental health difficulties, specifically relating to anxiety and depression, and their recovery. The video also includes a short pre-recorded debrief by a batyr representative who emphasises key themes. There will be no contact with trained mental health professionals. As the intervention is delivered digitally, participants can complete this study at their desired location.

Active control. Participants in the control group will view one video (8 minutes) of an individual speaking about the benefits of healthy eating. The information on healthy eating was adapted from an Australian Government resource (Australian National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013), and all videos followed the same script.

Qualitative interviews will also be used to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of young adults towards the contact-based intervention from those with high and low mental health distress.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

Perceptions of mental health stigma and help-seeking intentions measured using the Generalised Anxiety Stigma Scale (GASS), the Self-Stigma of Mental Illness Scale (SSOMI) and the General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ) at post-intervention.

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Perceptions of public and self-stigma using the Generalised Anxiety Stigma Scale (GASS), the Self-Stigma of Mental Illness Scale (SSOMI) and the General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ) at one week following the intervention.
2. Perceptions of intervention measured using data collected during semi-structured qualitative interviews after the intervention

Completion date
31/03/2025

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Undergraduate psychology students
2. Aged 17-24 years

Participant type(s)
Learner/student

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
17 Years

Upper age limit
24 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
328

Key exclusion criteria
Aged over 25 years old

Date of first enrolment
01/04/2021

Date of final enrolment
30/08/2021

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Australia

Study participating centre
Macquarie University
Balaclava rd
Macquarie University
Australia
2109

Sponsor information

Organisation
Black Dog Institute

ROR
https://ror.org/04rfr1008

Funder(s)

Funder type
Other

Funder Name
Investigator initiated and funded

Funder Name
Batyr Australia

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated during and analysed during the current study will be available upon request from Prof Jennie Hudson, jennie.hudson@unsw.edu.au.
• The type of data that will be shared is anonymised demographic data (only those that will not

allow re-identification), primary and secondary outcomes, treatment condition, and timepoint.
• Timing for availability is on request
• Whether consent from participants was required and obtained: The consent form allows sharing of de-identified data for studies approved by an ethics board.
• Comments on data anonymization: data will be screened by authors to ensure no data will be shared that allows re-identification
• Any ethical or legal restrictions: Only requests that have evidence of approval from an institutional ethics committee will be considered.

IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article		10/06/2026	23/07/2026	Yes	No
Participant information sheet	version 1	23/09/2020	27/03/2025	No	Yes