



## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

### EVALUATION OF MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS – A RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIAL

You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by Professor Tony Jorm (Principal Researcher) and Co-researchers, Ms Betty Kitchener and Julie-Anne Fischer, at ORYGEN Research Centre, Department of Psychiatry, The University of Melbourne. It has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee and is funded by an Australian Rotary Health Research Fund.

#### ***What is mental health first aid?***

Mental Health First Aid 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 Mental Health First Aid training program was developed in 2001 by Ms Betty Kitchener and Professor Tony Jorm. Educational materials have been developed to teach skills to members of the general public, in how to recognize and provide initial help to people with a mental health problem or in a crisis situation. See [www.mhfa.com.au](http://www.mhfa.com.au) for further information.

#### ***What is the project about?***

The primary aim of this project is to evaluate the impact of mental health first aid educational materials on mental health literacy (knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders, which aid their recognition, management or prevention), confidence in providing first aid, stigmatizing attitudes and first aid actions taken to help people with mental health problems. A secondary aim is to evaluate the impact of the educational materials on the first aider's mental health.

#### ***What will I be asked to do?***

If you wish to participate, you will need to have a computer with a CD drive and have access to the internet. You will be asked to complete the attached *Consent Form*. This involves typing in your name, address and date on the form and returning it as an email attachment to [jfischer@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jfischer@unimelb.edu.au).

You will be asked to fill in **three online surveys** over a **seven month** period. These will ask about your knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards people with mental health problems such as depression and schizophrenia. Each survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete at a time that is convenient to you.

You will be sent an email with a link to each survey. The first will be at the commencement of the study. After completing this, you will be randomly assigned into one of the following groups:

- Group 1: receive a Mental Health First Aid **e-learning CD** (approx 12 hours to complete); or
- Group 2: receive a Mental Health First Aid **hard-copy Manual**, or
- Group 3: be added to a **Waiting List** to receive educational materials.

Those who are assigned to Groups 1 and 2 will be sent weekly emails for four weeks, as a reminder to pace themselves through the educational material.

Approximately one month after completing the first survey, all participants will be sent an email with a link to the second survey. Approximately six-months thereafter, all participants will be sent an email with a link to the third (follow-up) survey. We will be comparing survey responses from people who work through the educational materials, with survey responses from people who are on the Waiting List.

After completing all three surveys, **all** participants will receive *both* the Mental Health First Aid e-learning CD and the hard-copy Mental Health First Aid Manual. These are FREE and yours to keep.

### ***Who is being invited to participate?***

Adult members of the general public (18 years and over).

### ***What about privacy?***

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Any data we collect from you will be held under password protection and not divulged to others. The data will be kept for a minimum of 5 years before being destroyed. We will only report the results in a statistical summary form that will not allow individuals to be identified.

### ***Why do you require my contact details?***

Personal contact details are required in order to send you the educational materials under investigation. However, your data will be stored with an ID number and without your name attached.

### ***Are there any risks?***

We believe there are no risks to you in taking part. Many thousands of people have received Mental Health First Aid training and no ill effects have been found so far. If however, you find that you become upset or distressed from answering the questions, please stop completing the survey and contact Julie-Anne Fischer. Julie is a trained counsellor and will refer you to other help, if necessary. Alternatively, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or you may wish to speak to someone from your own support network (including health professionals, family or friends) about how you're feeling. In any case, we urge you to contact Julie so that we can keep a record of the number of people that become distressed (if any) and the issues around any distress.

### ***What are the benefits?***

This project has the potential to increase mental health first aid skills within the general community, which might include:

- improved mental health literacy (e.g. better identification of possible signs of mental illness)
- increased confidence in providing help to those who are developing a mental illness or are in a crisis situation;
- increased helping behaviours towards people with mental health problems;
- reduced stigma associated with mental illness; and
- improvements in first-aider mental health.

### ***Will I find out the results of the study?***

At the end of the study, all participants who wish to know the results will be sent a letter summarizing the main findings.

### ***Who do I contact to participate in the project?***

If you would like to participate in the study, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by filling in the accompanying consent form and emailing it back to Julie-Anne Fischer at ORYGEN Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, on email: [jfischer@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jfischer@unimelb.edu.au). If you would like further information about the study, or have queries about the role of a participant, please contact Julie on tel: +61 3 9342 3768 or mobile: 0401 772 648.

### ***What if I have concerns about the study?***

If you have concerns about the scientific aspects of the study, please contact Professor Tony Jorm on + 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, Vic 3010, phone 03 8344 2073 or fax 03 9347 6739.