Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
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INFORMED CONSENT

Protocol Title: Perceptions of Mental Health, Treatment, and Recovery

This informed consent is intended to be used as the opening page of an online survey for adults competent to consent.

Principal Researcher:
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The writer uses non-technical language to include all groups of individuals who might take this survey. When writing a research description, it can be easy for researchers to slip into familiar scientific jargon (e.g., depressive symptoms, dysthymic, etc.). In order to ensure your participants' full understanding, researchers must attend to their writing style and make participant materials concise and easy to understand.

INTRODUCTION: You are invited to participate in a research study about opinions and attitudes related to mental health, treatment, and recovery. We are interested in adults (with diverse backgrounds, some who have experienced depressed or sad thoughts, and some who have not had these thoughts before.) Participants are required to be age 18 or older to be eligible for this study. This study consists of an online survey that contains a short reading, and four surveys, including a demographic survey. In all, the study will take approximately 20 minutes.

Here, the writer lists their exclusion criteria. Anyone under 18 may not participate.

Set expectations for your participants by including a reasonable time limit for your survey. Survey hosts such as Qualtrics can help you estimate the time your survey will take to complete.

Describe the aim of the study for participants.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE? We are interested in the impact of sadness on attention and learning.

Describe what data you plan to collect and how (e.g., survey data). Whenever possible, provide examples for the participant to understand what will be asked of them.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete four surveys.

- The first survey will ask you about your emotional state and if you have in the last week experienced depressed or sad thoughts (e.g., "Have you felt sad in the last two weeks?").
- The second survey includes questions about your level of attention (e.g., "Do you prefer taking notes during a lecture?").
- The third survey includes questions about learning and comprehension (e.g., "How do you prefer to learn?").
- The final survey collects information about your demographics (e.g., "What is your race/ethnicity?")

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Most survey studies will pose minimal risk to participants. Researchers should be clear about the types of risk their participants might encounter, including thinking through possible emotional distress or risk to confidentiality.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? The study has minimal risk, meaning no more risk than adults would encounter in their normal, daily online activities. Your responses will be confidential, and you will not be asked to provide any personal identifying information. Your participation is voluntary. You may skip any question that you do not want to answer, and you may leave the study at any time.

WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There are no direct benefits to you for participating. Participation may benefit the field of psychology to better understand how emotion impacts attention.

In this study, the participants do not receive any type of direct benefit (e.g., therapy, diagnosis, screening). Compensation for research participation is not considered a benefit. Research applicants will often state, "No direct benefit" and still offer payment for participation. **Overstated benefits** is the most frequent comment researchers receive from IRB reviewers. Overstating research benefits can be coercive. If benefits cannot be guaranteed, a researcher should not use the world "will" or other absolute words (e.g., could, entire, or complete).

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY? You will not be paid for participating in this study.

If you plan to pay participants in an online setting, you will want a way of collecting contact information from participants for payment while keeping the study confidential. For drawings where you pay only a select group of participants, you may use language such as: *"You will have the chance to enter your name into a drawing for an Amazon gift card valued at $50 at the end of the survey. Your chances of receiving the gift card are approximately 1/125. You do not have to enter the drawing to complete the survey. If you would like to enter the drawing, you will be asked to list your email address at the end of the survey. You can use a generic email address instead of a primary one, if you prefer (e.g., genericemail@gmail.com). Your contact information will not be associated with your survey responses. Your contact information and survey responses will be stored separately. Only the person whose name is drawn will be emailed.*

WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS? The study is over when you have completed the survey. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you have not finished.

Researchers should specify the measures they will use to keep participant data secure.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY Any electronic or digital information will be stored on a computer that is password protected. There will be no record matching your contact information with your data.

Make sure to include all activities for which you may intend to use the data (in both the foreseeable and distant future). In some cases, researchers collecting data do not initially intend to publish the results, so they do not include this information in the consent form. However, if they later decide they want to publish the results, researchers will be limited by the stipulations outlined in the consent form.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED? All collected data will be analyzed and used solely for professional purposes such as journal articles or programs to be used for educational purposes.

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WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY? Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the research or your role as a participant in this study, please contact Dr. Anna Freud at A.Freud@tc.columbia.edu, 212-222-2222. If at any time you have comments or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105, and our email is IRB@tc.edu. Or, you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.

Include both the PI's contact information as well as TC IRB's contact information on every consent form.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- Identifiers may be removed from the data. De-identifiable data may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research without additional informed consent from the subject or the representative.
- I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

Having read the information given above, if you are willing to participate in the survey, please continue on to the next page. By pressing the next button and continuing to the survey, you confirm you are 18 years or older and hereby consent to participate in the study.

If your study is online, you're working with adults competent to consent, the study is low risk, and the study activities are survey-based, you can replace signature lines with "I agree" checkboxes. For example, you can state: "By clicking 'I agree,' you agree to participate in this study. You also confirm that you are 18 years or older and a fourth grade math teachers who has taught for at least 2 years." Researchers can also have participants type their names into a text field to indicate consent. For example, "By checking the "I agree" box and typing your full name below, you are electronically signing this consent form to participate in the study." The "I agree" checkboxes do not have to appear on the consent document itself, as they can be added through your survey host once the consent form is imported. Qualtrics (a survey creation tool) is available to TC affiliates through my.tc.columbia.edu. Digital signatures may be accepted in some cases if you use DocuSign or EchoSign. However, the IRB will review this method on a case-by-case basis.