

Appendix C: Information Sheet



Information Sheet

Who am I?

My name is Hannah May and I am a trainee Clinical Psychologist in the Department of Psychology at the University of Bath, supervised by Dr Rachel Paskell and Dr Catherine Hamilton-Giachritsis. I am conducting this study into how people experience assessment and/or therapy for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) when they have no memory of the trauma that caused it.

What is this study about?

I am looking for people to take part in an interview either face to face or over the phone. In this interview I would like to talk to you about **your experiences of assessment/therapy for PTSD**. I am interested in how people experience PTSD assessment/therapy when they can't remember the trauma.

Why does that matter?

There are some well-evidenced and effective psychological therapies available to help people recover from PTSD, but they all involve working with or "reprocessing" the trauma memories in some way during the therapy. Research has shown however that some people who have experienced trauma cannot remember what happened to them, but still experience many of the difficult and distressing symptoms of PTSD. There have been no studies into how people in this situation experience assessment/therapy for their PTSD when they have no memories to reprocess.

What would you need to do?

I would like to invite you to an interview where we would talk **about your experiences of assessment/therapy** (not the event itself), the impact this has had on you and the impact that being unable to remember your trauma had on the assessment/therapy. The interview will be about the assessment and/or therapy you have received, not about the traumatic event. As part of our initial phone conversation, I will ask you to tell me in broad terms what kind of experience led to you having symptoms of PTSD, for example being assaulted, witnessing an accident or having traumatic experiences at work. You do not have to answer this question if you don't want to, and I will not ask you any further details about what happened or when. There are no right or wrong answers – I just want to hear about your personal experience. The interview itself will last about 1 hour and will take place at a time that suits you. The discussion will be recorded so that I can catch everything that you say and listen to it again later.

Before the interview I will also ask you to fill in a questionnaire about your memory for the trauma event. This will only ask about the quality of the memory, for example how clear, accessible or intense it is. It will not ask for any details about the trauma event itself. This questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Where would we meet?

If possible, the interview will take place wherever you had assessment/therapy. If this is not possible for any reason, I can arrange for us to meet at an NHS location in Wiltshire or South Bristol. The interview will take place in a private room and I will be the only person you need to meet and speak to.

If you live very far from the area or don't want to travel, then we can conduct the interview over the phone. We can discuss what option works best for you and any travel expenses will be reimbursed in full.

Do you have to take part?

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary, and you are free to make your own choice about whether you want to participate. If you agree to take part you can choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to.

If you say yes to taking part, can you change your mind later?

You are free to withdraw from the interview process at any time and you do not have to give me a reason for doing so. Once the interview has taken place, you may ask for your data to be withdrawn and destroyed up until four weeks after the interview date. This is because the audio recordings of the interviews will be typed up into anonymous written format and after this happens it will no longer be possible to identify your data. I will make it clear to you when your interview takes place what the deadline is for withdrawing your data.

What if you feel distressed during or after the interview?

I recognise that it may be difficult and upsetting to talk about your experiences of having therapy for PTSD. If you feel that you will become too distressed then I would advise against taking part in the study because your wellbeing is more important than research.

If you do decide that you feel able to take part, then what you tell me is entirely up to you and you do not have to share anything that you do not want to. I will remind you before and throughout the interview that you are free to stop the interview or take a break at any time. If you feel you are likely to become upset we can talk about this beforehand and you can tell me how best to support you should this happen.

You will be given time at the end of the interview to discuss how you found it and an opportunity to talk about any issues that came up for you e.g., if any questions were confusing or unclear. I will also encourage you to continue talking to me for a few minutes after the interview has ended about a different topic, to give you a chance to reduce any distress you may be feeling. When the interview is over I will provide you with a list of mental health providers and other local agencies in your area that can offer you support if you feel distressed when it is time to leave the interview or afterwards. If you would like me to contact anyone on your behalf then I will gladly do so, with your permission.

What will happen to the information you provide?

Should you decide to take part, the interview will be audio recorded. Before and during the interview I will remind you to avoid mentioning personal details e.g. names and addresses whilst we are recording. These recordings will then be typed up and the files stored on an

encrypted password-protected computer. Where possible interviews will be typed up by me personally, but I may have to use an external company to help me with this. If this happens, then I will securely send the recordings to the company, who have special permission to handle personal data. I will not give the company any other details about you. Any potentially identifying details, including your name, will be removed and the original audio recordings will be securely destroyed.

Once the project is completed, the anonymous information you have given to me will be kept safely by the University of Bath. If you give your consent, it may be used by other genuine researchers, with the University of Bath's approval, under the strict rules governing the confidentiality of your information. Your name and any other information/material that might identify you will never be used or given to anyone.

Are there any circumstances when your confidentiality may be broken?

The only time this would happen is if you were to tell me that you or someone else were at risk of serious harm. In this case I may have to tell someone else, for example your GP or relevant professionals, in order to keep you/others safe. If I have to do this I will always talk to you first so that you understand what is happening and why.

What will happen to the results of this research?

What you tell me will inform our project on how people experience assessment/therapy for PTSD when they can't remember the trauma that caused it. I will use all the interviews I collect to look for similarities and differences in the experiences of people who have assessment/therapy under these circumstances. The findings of the research will be included in my doctoral thesis, and they may then also be published in research journals or used in presentations. I may use extracts taken from our interview, however these would be carefully anonymised and would not identify you to anyone. If you would like to be sent a written summary of the findings, then I will gladly arrange this.

What do you do if you would like to take part or have any more questions?

You can contact me, Hannah May, to arrange a suitable time or to discuss any questions you might have. My contact details are:

Email – h.may@bath.ac.uk

You can also speak to the supervisors of the project,

Dr Rachel Paskell: Email – r.g.paskell@bath.ac.uk Phone – 01225 38 30 96

Dr Catherine Hamilton-Giachritsis: Email – C.Hamilton-Giachritsis@bath.ac.uk Phone - 01225 383970

If you have any concerns related to your participation in this study please direct them to the Chair of the Department of Psychology Research Ethics Committee, email: psychology-ethics@bath.a.uk.

Our address is: Department of Psychology, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 7AY

Many thanks for taking the time to read this. I would be delighted if you would be willing to take part.