Mental Health Promotion and Intervention in Occupational Settings: Research Project

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Information sheet for participants

You are invited to take part in a research study of an intervention aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, as well as promoting mental health and wellbeing and fighting against the stigma of mental (ill-) health. Before you decide if you would like to participate, it is important for you to know why the research is being done and what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the project about?

Depression and anxiety are the most common mental health difficulties in the workplace in the European Union, causing immense suffering and costing the global economy €1 trillion each year in lost productivity. Those working in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are particularly vulnerable. However, most SMEs have limited capacity to address mental health promotion and provide mental health interventions to staff. The project aims to improve mental health and wellbeing and reduce depression and suicidal ideation in the employees and employers of SMEs in Europe and Australia.

What is the aim of this study?

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of intervention in SMEs in nine countries. This study will help to obtain information on the standard and intensity of carrying out of the interventions, as well as information on the perspectives and experiences of employees and employers who engaged with the intervention. This study will include employees and employers of SMEs in the heath, construction and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sectors as these sectors have been identified as having an increased risk of mental health difficulties. However, the ultimate aim of the project is to expand the programme to all SMEs. Considering the long-term impacts on people in general, especially people with existing mental health issues, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, this project is extremely timely.

What would taking part in the project mean for me?

This study involves conducting a randomised clinical trial where those completing the intervention are compared to a group who do not complete the intervention. A brief introductory session, organised by the Lead Investigator and Research Officer in your area, will take place, to tell you about the study, to answer any questions you may have and to show you how to sign up to participate in the study. Once you sign up to participate, you and your organisation will be assigned to one of two groups: (1) the intervention group who will be offered an online, evidence based mental health intervention or (2) the waitlist group who will be offered the online intervention after a period of thirteen months on the waitlist. All participants will eventually gain access to the online intervention.

Before gaining access to the intervention (or starting the wait period), you will be requested to complete a survey. This survey will assess wellbeing, burnout, depressive symptoms and

suicidal ideation, and help seeking behaviour. You will also be asked to complete a standard socio-demographic sheet, which will ask you questions such as your gender, age and marital status. Important information related to your work, relationship, family, health and mental health will also be collected. This survey will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. You will be asked to complete surveys on two more occasions: nine months and thirteen months following the first survey. Completing surveys at these timepoints will help us to identify any changes you experienced during the period of this intervention. You will also have the opportunity to discuss your views on the interventions in an online focus group with others who completed the pilot interventions.

How will I benefit from participating in this research?

The interventions being offered are evidence based, and therefore it is expected to be beneficial for individuals with or without a clinically relevant mental health issue. Based on the use of evidence-based interventions, it is anticipated that benefits experienced by participants may include a reduction in stress, burnout, depressive and anxiety symptoms, as well as potentially reducing stigma related to mental (ill) health. The study is expected to improve your overall mental health, which in turn will have significance on your overall wellbeing and work performance.

In previous projects, the interventions being offered in this study, have been shown to have beneficial effects on mental health without any negative effects. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there will be any negative effects for participants.

Considering the short-term and long-term impacts of COVID-19, including staff stress and anxiety, reduced quality and perhaps intensity of care for those with mental disorders, or other impacts associated with the COVID-19-crisis, the project is timely while it offers to SMEs support and intervention tools with a specific focus on alleviating depression and anxiety among staff.

How will my information be used?

The information you provide will be used to understand mental health and wellbeing, identify factors that influence mental health and wellbeing, and will be used to evaluate the benefits of the interventions.

Findings from the pilot study will be published in academic journals and other sources such as social media and news bulletins. Findings will be reported on all data collected, not single individual data, and those completing data analysis will not have access to participants' names ensuring participants anonymity in any publications.

Will my participation in this project be kept confidential?

If it is possible to carry out this project face-to-face, the core project team will meet you and know that you are taking part. Additionally, elements of the interventions may take place within your workplace setting such as an introduction session and workshops. Any information you provide will only be used for the purposes of this project. If you would like to access your information or if you would like your information to be deleted at any time you can contact the research team at the contact details below. More information about the storage and protection of your personal information is detailed in the *Data Protection Notice* below.

Your Participation

Participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate without giving a reason and without experiencing any negative consequences. Deciding to withdraw from the project will

in no way effect your working life and it is possible to withdraw by notifying Dr Clíodhna O'Connor or Dr Mallorie Leduc, mentupp@ucc.ie.

Who is organising and funding this project?
The project is being conducted by an interdisciplinary consortium led by Professor Ella Arensman, Chief Scientist, National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF), Ireland. The study will be led by Professor Ella Arensman, Chief Scientist, National Suicide Research Foundation and Dr. Paul Corcoran, Head of Research, NSRF. The project is being funded by European Commission, Horizon 2020.

Additional information
I understand that if I have any questions concerning this research, I can contact the Chief Investigator listed above. I understand that the study has been approved by the Clinical Research Ethics Committee at University College Cork and if I have further queries concerning my rights in connection with the research, I can contact the Clinical Research Ethics Committee at Clinical Research Ethics Committee of the Cork Teaching Hospitals, Lancaster Hall 6 Little Hanover Street, Cork, +353(0)21 4901901 or email crec@ucc.ie.

More information about the project is available from:
Dr Clíodhna O'Connor and Dr Mallorie Leduc
Researcher Officers
National Suicide Research Foundation/University College Cork
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