**LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY**

**Participant Information Sheet for Person-Centred Counsellors.**

**LJMU’s Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference**: **NAHPGT(CP)2006, 26/01/2021**

**YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET**

**Title of Study** *Person centred therapists’ experiences of working with clients on the autistic spectrum: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.*

You are being invited to take part in a study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the study us being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part. If you decide to take part in this study the researcher can be contacted via email [D.Keenan@2018.ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:D.Keenan@2018.ljmu.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

1. **Who will conduct the study?**

**Study Team**

**Principal Investigator**: Dawn Keenan (MA student)

**Contact details:** [D.Keenan@2018.ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:D.Keenan@2018.ljmu.ac.uk)

**Co-investigator:** Lesley Dougan Programme Lead MA Counselling and Psychotherapy Practice and supervisor for this research.

**Contact details**: [l.s.dougan@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:l.s.dougan@ljmu.ac.uk)

**School/Faculty within LJMU**: Nursing and Allied Health – Faculty of Health

1. **What is the purpose of the study?**

My name is Dawn Keenan, I am a Neurodivergent 3rd year MA Counselling and Psychotherapy practice student at Liverpool John Moores University. This study has personal significance for the researcher , who is experienced in working with autistic clients. The study aims to explore person-centred therapists’ experiences of working with clients on the autistic spectrum.

The researcher’s methodology will use ‘Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis’ and aims to recruit three to six participants. In the process of reviewing literature, the researcher found limited evidence of person-centred therapists experiences with clients on the autistic spectrum. This study aims to explore and develop knowledge in this area, whilst enhancing the researcher’s personal interest.

1. **Why have I been invited to participate?**

You have been invited to participate in this research project to explore p*erson centred therapists’ because you have experiences of working with clients on the autistic spectrum.*

You have been invited because you meet the inclusion criteria :

* practicing as a qualified person-centred therapist,
* registered with a counselling and psychotherapy professional body (e.g., BACP, NCS etc.)
* has experience of or is currently working with adult clients on the autistic spectrum.
* Participants practicing within England or Wales.

**Exclusion criteria for taking part in the research will be:**

* Trainee counsellors.
* Counsellors who are not currently in practice.

1. **Do I have to take part?**

Your decision to participate in this research is a voluntary decision whether to take part or not*. You are under no obligation to take part, but if you do decide to participate you will be provided with this information sheet and a consent form to sign.*

1. **What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you decide to take part, consent form will be provided prior to participating. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with the interview questions, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher or the named supervisor. Contact details of academic supervisor and researcher are given below. It is expected that you will be either interviewed using an online platform i.e., zoom. It is expected that only one session will be needed and if you feel the need for further information with procedures then this can be arranged to discuss in more detail. If you feel you would like assistance in the use of zoom, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher so additional information can be supplied.

Online interviews will be expected to take approximately around sixty to ninety minutes. Both researcher and participant will be expected to have access to appropriate technology to suit the requirements of the study. It is expected that the use of zoom is considered an appropriate platform, and this will need to be downloaded prior to participation. Prior to participation the researcher will request a suitable time and date from the participant and schedule a meeting via the researchers LJMU email.

1. **Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?**

The interview is expected to be recorded whilst on zoom using audio/video and will be recorded on an encrypted audio device. The researcher will then transfer the recording to a secure storage and delete the original recording from the device. If you do not feel comfortable with this an alternative solution is that the researcher can record the interview using an encrypted device such as a Dictaphone whilst the interview is conducted on zoom.

If at any point you feel uncomfortable with the interview being audio/video recorded, you are free to decline and can request to stop the recording at any time.

The audio/video recording is crucial to your participation and you should feel with the recording process and you are free to stop the recording at any time.

The audio and/or video recordings of your interview produced during this study will be utilized only for analysis. No additional use of these activities will be used without your written consent.

1. **What should I consider?**

• Circumstances which may prevent participants from taking part in the research.

• If participants are able to take part if they are included in additional research.

1. **Are there any possible disadvantages or risks from taking part?**

It is expected within this research there are not any conceivable risks or events that may cause distress to the participants. However, if in the course of the study you experience any adverse distress please inform the researcher or supervisor as soon as possible. In the event of being personally affected due to participating in this study you may well want to obtain support/advice please do not hesitate to contact either myself at :

Researcher

[**D.Keenan@2018.ljmu.ac.uk**](mailto:D.Keenan@2018.ljmu.ac.uk)

or my supervisor,

[**L.S.Dougan@ljmu.ac.uk**](mailto:L.S.Dougan@ljmu.ac.uk)

Alternatively, you can also contact your regulatory/professional/ethical body, clinical/professional supervisor.

1. **What will happen to the data provided and how will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

The information you provide as part of the study is the **study data**. Any study data from which you can be identified (e.g. from identifiers such as your name, date of birth, audio recording etc.), is known as **personal data**.This includes more sensitive categories of personal data (**sensitive data**) such as your race; ethnic origin; politics; religion; trade union membership; genetics; biometrics (where used for ID purposes); health; sex life; or sexual orientation.

When you agree to take part in a study, we will use your personal data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the study and if necessary, to verify and defend, when required, the process and outcomes of the study. Personal data will be accessible to the study team. The researcher will ensure that the collection of any personal data and any identifiable information is preserved as stated above.

When we do not need to use personal data, it will be deleted, or identifiers will be removed. Personal data does not include data that cannot be identified to an individual (e.g. data collected anonymously or where identifiers have been removed). However, your consent form, contact details, audio recordings etc. will be retained until the researcher successfully completes the MA.

You will not be identifiable in any ensuing reports or publications. The researcher will use pseudonyms in transcripts and reports to help protect the identity of individuals and organisations unless you tell us that you would like to be attributed to information/direct quotes etc. The interview recordings will be transcribed by the researcher. You can withdraw from the study even if consent is given, but you will not be able to withdraw from the study once the data has been amalgamated by the researcher. Parts of the transcript during the interview may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations and that such quotes will be anonymised.

1. **Limits to confidentiality**

Please note that confidentiality may not be guaranteed; for example, due to the limited size of the participant sample, the position of the participant or information included in reports, participants might be indirectly identifiable in transcripts and reports.

The investigator will work with the participant in an attempt to minimise and manage the potential for indirect identification of participants.

The investigator will keep confidential anything they learn or observe related to illegal activity unless related to the abuse of children or vulnerable adults, money laundering or acts of terrorism.

In certain exceptional circumstances where you or others may be at significant risk of harm, the investigator may need to report this to an appropriate authority. This would usually be discussed with you first. Examples of those exceptional circumstances when confidential information may have to be disclosed are:

* The investigator believes you are at serious risk of harm, either from yourself or others
* The investigator suspects a child may be at risk of harm
* You pose a serious risk of harm to, or threaten or abuse others
* As a statutory requirement e.g., reporting certain infectious diseases
* Under a court order requiring the University to divulge information
* We are passed information relating to an act of terrorism.

1. **What will happen to the results of the study?**

The researcher intends to complete a dissertation to satisfy their MA and hopefully disseminate the findings at the BACP Research Conference and via professional journals.

1. **Who is organising this study ?**

This study is organised by Liverpool John Moores University as part of a Masters programme.

1. **Who has reviewed this study?**

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (**LJMU’s Research Ethics Committee Reference**: **NAHPGT(CP)2006, 26/01/2021**.

1. **What if something goes wrong?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact the relevant investigator who will do their best to answer your query. The investigator should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how they intend to deal with it. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact the chair of the Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk) and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

1. **Data Protection Notice**

Liverpool John Moores University is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom. We will be using information from you and/or your medical records in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study *[If LJMU is not the sole Data Controller this will need to be revised and the other data controller added. An explanation provided in the ethics application].* This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. Liverpool John Moores University will process your personal data for the purpose of research. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest. Liverpool John Moores University will keep identifiable information about you until the researcher successfully completes the Masters qualification.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the study to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally identifiable information possible.

You can find out more about how we use your information at URL and/or by contacting [secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk)

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact LJMU in the first instance at [secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk). If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of data subject rights, are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>

1. If you have any concerns or are unsure about the research regarding the purpose, method, intended outcomes of the study you have the option of speaking to the researcher via telephone or online medium via zoom. Under no circumstances will the researcher expect an immediate answer for you to participate during this time and you may respond yes or no via email.

**Contact for further information**

**Name of investigator:** Dawn Keenan

**Email:** [D.Keenan@2018.ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:D.Keenan@2018.ljmu.ac.uk)

**Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this study.**