

## **Participant Information Sheet: Individual Interviews**

### **“Exploring Mental Health Professionals' Integration of Nutritional Psychiatry Research into Clinical Practice.”**

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

This study aims to explore how mental health professionals apply findings from the field of nutritional psychiatry—the study of the relationship between diet/nutrition and mental health—in clinical practice. Despite strong evidence supporting the role of nutrition in mental health, there is limited research on how clinicians implement these findings. As you are a mental health practitioner, we are keen to hear your perspectives and experiences, whether nutrition is a key part of your work, something you discuss occasionally, or not something you don't engage with at all. The findings are expected to inform education and training.

A separate part of this study, involving focus groups, is part of a larger international collaboration, which will see data collected from mental health professionals across Europe, Australasia, and North America. This will help us to understand if there are differences in clinicians' experiences across these geographical regions.

#### **What will I have to do?**

You will be invited to attend an online one-to-one interview via Microsoft Teams for one session lasting 45 to 60 minutes, on a mutually agreed day and time. During the interview, you will be asked questions about your perspectives and experiences regarding nutrition and mental health advice in your practice. The session will be recorded for later transcription. Prior to the interview, we will ask you to complete a short online questionnaire to record basic demographic information and professional details, to help us better understand the perspectives represented in the study.

Please note that your participation is as an individual professional, not as a representative of the Health Service Executive (HSE), National Health Service (NHS), or any other employer. We assure you that any opinions or insights you provide will not be attributed to any employer in our study findings.

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

While there are no direct benefits anticipated for you from participating in this study, you may experience personal satisfaction from contributing to this research. Additionally, the process may encourage you to reflect on your experiences as a mental health professional and the role of diet and nutrition in mental health, which could enhance your clinical practice. More generally, the research may advance the integration of evidence-based research into mental health care.

#### **What are the risks?**

We do not foresee any negative outcomes from participating, as the topic is professional rather than personal. However, if any questions cause discomfort or distress, you may refuse to answer them, request that the recording be paused or stopped, or you may decide to discontinue the interview. The interviewer will provide information on relevant support services if needed.

**What if I do not want to take part?**

Participation is entirely voluntary. There is no obligation to take part, and you can withdraw from the study at any point up to two weeks after the interview takes place, without any consequences.

**What happens to the information?**

The information gathered from the pre-interview questionnaire and interviews will be handled in complete confidence. The information from the questionnaire will be aggregated (combined with responses from other participants) to create an overall profile of study participants, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality in reporting and publications resulting from the research.

Once your interview is completed, the recording will be immediately transferred to Jayne Leonard's GDPR-compliant UL-licensed OneDrive cloud storage system. The data will be transcribed by the researcher, and all identifying information, such as names and locations, will be removed and you will be assigned a fictitious name. After this process, the recording will be deleted. The information that is gathered in the study will be securely stored for seven years. After this time, it will be destroyed.

**What if something goes wrong?**

In the unlikely event that something goes wrong during the interview, the session will be paused until both the researcher and participant are ready to resume, or it may be stopped entirely. The interviewer will provide information on relevant support services if required.

**What happens at the end of the study?**

At the conclusion of the study, the information will be used to present results, but all data will be pseudonymous. In accordance with UL's Data Retention Policy, all data will be retained for seven years after project completion on the UL-licensed, GDPR-compliant OneDrive cloud server of the Principal Investigator, Dr Anne Griffin. After this period, it will be permanently deleted.

**What if I have more questions or do not understand something.**

If you have any questions or do not understand any aspect of the research, please contact the researchers for clarification. It is important that you feel completely at ease during the research.

**What if I change my mind during the study?**

If at any point you wish to stop participating, you are free to do so. However, two weeks after the interview, transcription will commence, and it will no longer be possible to withdraw.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

**Project Investigator Contact Details:****Principal Investigator**

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***This research study has received Ethics approval from the Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee (2025-01-04-EHS).***

***If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact:***

***Chair Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee***

***EHS Faculty Office***

***University of Limerick***

***Tel +353 (61) 234101***