

## INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

### *“How are the values of counsellors shaped by the transition from student to qualified practitioner?”*

#### **Invitation to take part in a research project**

You are being invited to take part in a research study that seeks to gain a deep sense and understanding of how the transition from student to professional counsellor shapes people in terms of their values and ideals, and the influence this has on their practice and personal growth.

Before you decide whether or not to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please [contact me](#) if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

**Thank you for reading this!**

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

I am a student at University Centre Weston (UCW, completing a BSc (Hons) degree in Counselling. This study is a small-scale research project that I have developed together with staff at UCW.

**This study will adopt a perspective of rich, holistic sense-making and empathic understanding to inquire what impact transition into the ‘real world’ counselling environment has on counsellor’s values, ideals and personal growth.**

Whilst there are several studies that investigate the experience of transition for students, they focus on practical issues around employability, skill gaps and challenges of working within regulatory framework. In contrast, this study will inquire, from the perspective of rich, holistic sense-making and empathic understanding, what influence transition has on counsellor's values, ideals and personal growth, and how they stay congruent with their aspirations and intentions.

This research will be of interest to student counsellors currently on their study path, and to teachers and student guides and supporters within the counselling education environment, who wish to understand and perhaps prepare themselves emotionally, mentally, even spiritually for this significant next step in their journey into the professional counselling world. Using narrative inquiry, stories of personal multifaceted transformation will be presented so that the reader can holistically experience the authentic voice of the participants.

Created by American sociologist Laurel Richardson, poetic re-presentation is a research technique in which a researcher creates found poetry from participant word transcripts. Incorporating found poetry re-presentation, this study aims to provide interested parties with research that is relevant, interesting and informative, but also appealing, easily interpreted and moving on an holistic level, that can be appreciated by as many readers as possible, whatever their academic or neuro-ability.

**NB you do not need poetry or creative writing skills to take part in this study and you will not be expected to take part in the found poetry or any other writing process.**

### Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to take part because:

- You are a practicing counsellor who qualified between 6 months and 5 years ago.
- You are familiar with the concepts of transition, personal development, values and congruence.

I will recruit up to 3 people for this study.

### Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time up until 14 days after interview and without giving a reason.

### What will happen to me if I take part?

This study will use semi-structured interviews to explore:

- The values and ideals you developed during your training
- How you have remained congruent with these values and ideals through your transition from student to practicing counsellor
- How the transition has challenged and changed your values and ideals
- The impact this has had on you, personally and in practice

Interviews will take place in person or online using MS Teams or Zoom, depending on your preference and availability. For in-person interviews, a comfortable and private room will be arranged at UCW Winter Gardens Campus, Weston-super-Mare. Interviews are expected to last for up to 1 hour and will be audio and (optionally) video recorded for accurate transcription and analysis.

Interview guides will be provided in advance to allow for consideration and reflection. The questions will be open-ended; therefore, it is expected that additional questions will arise during the course of the conversation.

In order that you may consider the implications of taking part in this study, and to allow for any questions that arise, you will have 14 days from receiving this information to decide whether you wish to continue with your participation or withdraw from the project.

Following the interviews, transcripts will be made available to you for review, and, where necessary, clarification and amendment.

**You will have the right to withdraw from this study, without question or giving a reason, at any time up to 14 days after interview.** Analysis of data will begin from this date and it will therefore no longer be possible for you to withdraw.

The data and final report will be used primarily for a BSc dissertation, it may also be circulated amongst students and be presented or published as poetry.

### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

Whilst the risks associated with this study are minimal, discussing your professional experiences and reflections on the challenges and opportunities of transition in terms of your personal values and ideals may potentially cause emotional responses or discomfort.

To mitigate these risks, I will put the following measures in place:

- Interviews can be paused or stopped upon request.
- There will be an opportunity to debrief with the researcher after the interview.
- You can contact the research supervisor should you need additional support.
- Participant data will be anonymised.
- Interviews will be scheduled to minimise disruption to you.
- Contact details for appropriate support services will be provided.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Your involvement in this research may offer a number of benefits:

- The interview process may provide an opportunity for you to reflect deeply on your personal and professional growth.
- Engaging with the research process may enhance your understanding of qualitative narrative inquiry research methods
- Engaging with the research process may give you the opportunity to explore poetic transcription processes.
- Many participants find satisfaction in knowing that their input helps enhance understanding in students and professionals.

### **Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential and anonymous?**

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified or identifiable in any reports or publications. Your institution will also not be identified or identifiable. Any data collected about you in the online questionnaire will be stored online in a form protected by passwords and other relevant security processes and technologies. Data collected may be

shared in an anonymised form to allow reuse by the research team. These anonymised data will not allow any individuals or their institutions to be identified or identifiable.

The data that I collect in this research will be seen by my Research Supervisor, Iphigenia Bytheway, one other member of the UCW Programme Team, one other academic UCW member of staff (who is not part of the Programme Team), an academic moderator and an external examiner (both from two different Universities) for quality assurance procedures and to receive clearance for ethical purposes.

Your Personal Data and the data I collect (recordings and transcripts) will be stored in separate lockable filing cabinets for the duration of the study. Once the grade for the dissertation has been approved both personal and research data will be destroyed.

### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

All data will be analysed and summarised in form of a dissertation. Once the dissertation has been approved, a summary report of the results will be available at the end of the project and if you request it, you will receive a copy. Dissertations may be stored in UCW's library, and some content may be used for training purposes.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

The study was reviewed by my Research Supervisor, Iphigenia Bytheway, one other member of the Programme Team, one academic member of staff who is not part of the Programme Team, an academic moderator and an external examiner for quality assurance procedures and to receive clearance for ethical purposes.

### **What if something goes wrong?**

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, the normal complaints procedures of Weston College are available to you.

Please contact:

PA to the Director of Higher Education

6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Knightstone Campus

Knightstone Road

Weston-super-Mare BS23 2AL

### **Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

All information you provide during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Written records will not include participants' names, and it will not be possible to recognise individuals from written reports.

Confidentiality will be maintained in line with current UK GDPR legislation and the UK Data Protection Act (2018). This will include ensuring that all data is kept securely on a password protected laptop. Personal data, recordings and transcripts will be deleted upon completion of the project.

Anonymity will be preserved at all stages of the research project, care will be taken in all forms of communication with participants to ensure that names are kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in the final report.

As the use of direct quotes will be included in the final report, all transcripts and the final report will be shared with participants for review and approval prior to submission.

Only myself as the researcher will hold the identity details of all participants and these will be held securely on a password protected laptop. The laptop itself will be safely secured when not in use.

### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

A summary report of the results will be available at the end of the project and if you request it, you will receive a copy.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

The study was reviewed by the Weston College Research Ethics Committee.

### **Further information**

If you would like to take part in the study or would like further information please contact **Jane Bowkett, [WS16415@weston.ac.uk](mailto:WS16415@weston.ac.uk)**.

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

**If you decide to take part in the study, you will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.**