

Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: *The lived experience of unpredictability: therapists with physical chronic illness in clinical practice.*

You are invited to take part in research taking place at Regent's University London (RUL). Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve.

Please read the following information carefully. If you have any queries or would like more information, please contact Miriam Reason, MA in Psychotherapy and Counselling, Regent's University London at s21003370@regents.ac.uk.

Who is organising the research?

The researcher for this project is Miriam Reason. My supervisor is Sharon Cahill and my Director of Programme is Barbara Feldtkeller.

What is the aim of the research?

The research aims to explore five areas of experience for therapists living with physical chronic illness: impact on client work and the therapeutic relationship; impact on the self; how they manage uncertainty; ethical considerations; and impact on professional development and future outlook.

I will be conducting 1-to-1 interviews with therapists who meet the inclusion criteria. The interviews will be made anonymous.

The results of my study will be analysed and summarised in a dissertation made available at RUL's library. The anonymised results may also be used in conference papers and peer-reviewed academic papers.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to participate because you:

- Have completed, or are in the process of completing, UKCP or BACP-accredited psychotherapy or counselling training;
- Are currently seeing clients, or have at least one year of previous client experience;
- Are registered or accredited with UKCP or BACP (trainee or qualified);
- Have a fluctuating physical chronic illness (defined as continually present but variable in severity, with unpredictable cycles of impairment and remission);
- Are fluent in English;
- Are available for a remote interview via Microsoft Teams.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form.

You may withdraw from the research without giving a reason until 2 weeks after your interview. If you withdraw within this period, any data you provided will be destroyed and excluded from analysis. Deciding to withdraw from the study does not carry any penalty.

If you want to withdraw from the study within this period, please write to me, Miriam Reason, at s21003370@regents.ac.uk.

What will happen to me if I take part and what do I have to do?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to join a short introductory meeting to check any queries and inclusion criteria if needed (10 minutes), followed by a 1-to-1 interview (1 to 1.5 hours). Both will take place on Microsoft Teams and will be conducted by me, Miriam Reason. As a trainee psychotherapist with chronic illness myself, I have some experience and am therefore sensitive to issues that may arise.

However, you are the expert, and the focus of the discussion will be your experiences with managing a physical chronic illness alongside clinical work. Your answers will be fully anonymised.

With your permission, your interview will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. You will be asked to choose a pseudonym before recording to preserve anonymity. At the point of transcription, any identifying information you have shared will be removed, and the audio recording will be deleted.

You will receive the anonymised transcript after the interview and have 2 weeks to redact or edit your responses.

What are the benefits of taking part?

There may be no direct personal benefit to taking part. By participating, you will be helping us gain a better understanding of the unique experiences faced by therapists with physical chronic illness in their clinical work. The study aims to improve understanding of therapists' experiences and may inform training, supervision, workplace adjustments, policy or future research.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

I do not foresee or anticipate any significant risk to you in taking part in this study. However, discussing chronic illness may cause emotional distress. I will adopt a warm, attuned style in the interview and you may ask to pause or stop the interview at any time. Given my experience with

the subject matter, I have designed the interview questions sensitively with an awareness of the challenges talking about chronic illness can bring. After the interview, you will receive a debrief email which will outline next steps and include signposting to appropriate professional support should you need it.

What will happen to your information?

All the information I receive from you will be treated in the strictest confidence. Everything you share in the interviews will be kept confidential and will be anonymised at the point of transcription. Any identifying information will be stored separately from the transcripts.

The only circumstance where we may not be able to keep your information confidential is if you were to share something which presents a risk of harm to yourself or others and this will be discussed with you at the time.

Hard copy research material will be in a locked cupboard which only I will have access to in accordance with the University's policy, the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation requirements. Voice recordings will be destroyed securely immediately after anonymised transcription. Your anonymised data will be analysed together with other interview data using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to identify themes across participants. Please note that anonymised transcripts will be included in the appendix of the report with your consent.

Data will be kept until 3 months after the degree is awarded, after which point it will be destroyed. The exception to this is if you withdraw from the research, at which point all data relating to you will be deleted, provided it has been no longer than 2 weeks after your interview.

Where will the results of the research study be published?

A dissertation will be written containing my research findings. The dissertation will be available at RUL library.

A hard copy of the dissertation will be made available to all research participants if you would like to see it. Key findings may also be shared outside RUL, for example presented at conferences or published externally. Anonymous and non-identifying direct quotes may be used for publication and presentation purposes.

Who has ethically approved this research?

The research will be conducted in line with UK Council for Psychotherapy ethical guidelines. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Regent's University London Research Ethics Committee.

Any comments, questions or complaints about the ethical conduct of this study can be addressed to the Director of Programme, Barbara Feldtkeller (Barbara.Feldtkeller@regents.ac.uk).

What if I have more questions or do not understand something?

If you would like any further information about the research, please contact me, Miriam Reason (s21003370@regents.ac.uk), in the first instance.

What if something goes wrong?

Should any concerns or complaints arise, you should contact my supervisor, Sharon Cahill (Sharon.Cahill@regents.ac.uk) in the first instance.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Sheet and your signed Consent Form to keep.