



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Looks Can be Deceiving: How do counsellors/psychotherapists navigate formulation and interventions when client difficulties could be understood as trauma responses, neurodivergent traits, or both?

Contact person: Kehinde Brown

Email: u3228684@uel.ac.uk

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part or not, please carefully read through the following information which outlines what your participation would involve. Feel free to talk with others about the study (e.g., friends, family, etc.) before making your decision. If anything is unclear or you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above email.

Who am I?

My name is Kehinde Brown. I am a postgraduate student in the Department of Psychology and Human Development at the University of East London (UEL), and I am studying for a MA in Counselling and Psychotherapy. As part of my studies, I am conducting the research that you are being invited to participate in.

What is the purpose of the research?

People with Autism and ADHD can share an overlap of symptoms with people who have experienced trauma. For counsellors and psychotherapists this similarity can be misleading and complex, as while they can share a similar presentation, and often co-occur they are not the same. Though there is increasing research that trauma responses and neurodivergent traits can mimic each other, there is limited research exploring how therapists differentiate between the two, when trauma and neurodivergence are both plausible frames for a clients' core issues, and how they arrive at a working formulation, and the implications on practice.

I am conducting research exploring how counsellors and psychotherapists navigate and make sense of the symptom overlap of trauma and neurodivergent traits, and how they understand the practical and relational consequences of framing difficulties

such as anxiety, relationship difficulties and emotional dysregulation, as trauma responses, neurodivergent traits, or both.

By exploring therapists' clinical experiences and perspectives, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of working with, and differentiating between trauma responses and neurodivergent traits. The study findings aim to lead to new insights that will inform professional practice on how to recognise trauma while respecting neurodivergence.

Why have I been invited to take part?

To address the study aims, I am inviting qualified practitioners, registered with BACP, UKCP, BCP or an equivalent professional body who are currently practising within the field of counselling and psychotherapy, to take part in my research.

For the purposes of the study it is important that participants have at least a years' post qualification experience of supporting individuals who have experienced trauma and/or who are neurodivergent (diagnosed or suspected).

As your professional background and experience aligns with the study you are eligible to take part.

It is entirely up to you whether you take part or not, participation is voluntary.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to take part?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to separately sign a consent form. If you agree to take part, you will consent to:

- Read and review the participant information form
- Provide written consent to participate in the study
- Attend a one- to- one interview , lasting between 60-90 minutes on MS Teams. The interview will take the form of an informal chat, where you will be given an opportunity to share your clinical experiences and perspectives. To facilitate the chat, it will be semi-structured, which means there will be some questions such as: "can you describe your experience of case formulation when client difficulties could reflect either trauma or neurodivergence(Autism, ADHD), or both"
- The interview being recorded (audio/video) for accurate transcription purposes.
- The recording being safely secured on University of East London's One Drive.
- That you will not receive payment in exchange for participation in this study.

Can I change my mind?

Yes, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. If you would like to withdraw from the study, you can

do so by contacting me on the email address below. If you withdraw, your data will not be used as part of the research.

Separately, you can also request to withdraw your data from being used even after you have taken part in the interview, provided that this request is made within 3 weeks of your interview date of the data being collected (after which point data analysis will begin, and withdrawal will not be possible).

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

- No known physical risks are anticipated as a result of you taking part.
- Participants may experience emotional distress reflecting on clinical experiences. To minimise the risk of any distress, you are free to skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering and encouraged to take breaks if and when needed. You are able to terminate the interview at any time, without having to give a reason.
- Following the interview you will be offered a debrief sheet containing information of supporting services should you wish to speak to someone for further support. You are also welcome to contact me if you have any follow-up questions or concerns after having taken part.

You participation is appreciated and every effort will be made to ensure the interview process feels safe, supportive and respectful.

How will the information I provide be kept secure and confidential?

Your identity will be protected, and your responses will only be reported anonymously:

- Participants will not be identified by the data collected, on any material resulting from the data collected, or in any write-up of the research.
- To protect the identity of the participants, all participant responses will be anonymised using pseudonyms or referred to using a letter (e.g. A, B, C), and any identifying information will be removed during the transcription of the interviews.
- I, Kehinde Brown, will be responsible for storing participant contact details, which will be securely stored on UEL's encrypted One Drive to ensure maximum privacy protection. Contact details will be deleted at the end of the study.
- All correspondence with participants will be through UEL's encrypted email system.
- Interview recordings will be deleted after transcription.
- The data obtained from the study will be in the form of a transcript and stored securely (access restricted and encrypted) on UEL's One Drive. I, Kehinde Brown, will have access to it. My supervisor, Suzannah Hill, will have access to an anonymised overview.

- Any data transferred will be via UEL's secure email system which is encrypted and password protected.
- All data collected will be managed in accordance with consent given and with the [Data Protection Act \(DPA\) 2018](#) and the [UK General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) 2018](#)
- If during the interview you indicate that you or someone else is at serious risk of harm, then disclosures will be reported to the relevant authority.

For the purposes of data protection, the University of East London is the Data Controller for the personal information processed as part of this research project. The University processes this information under the 'public task' condition contained in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Where the University processes particularly sensitive data (known as 'special category data' in the GDPR), it does so because the processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, or scientific and historical research purposes or statistical purposes. The University will ensure that the personal data it processes is held securely and processed in accordance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. For more information about how the University processes personal data please see www.uel.ac.uk/about/about-uel/governance/information-assurance/data-protection

What will happen to the results of the research?

The research will be written up as a thesis and submitted for assessment. Findings may also be disseminated to a range of audiences (e.g., academics, clinicians, public, etc.) through journal articles, conference presentations, talks, magazine articles, blogs. In all material produced, your identity will remain anonymous, in that, it will not be possible to identify you personally. All personally identifying information will be removed or replaced. All participants will be referred to using a pseudonym or 'participant and a letter' (e.g. Participant A).

You will be given the option to receive a summary of the research findings once the study has been completed for which relevant contact details will need to be provided.

Anonymised research data will be securely stored by Suzannah Hill- for a maximum of 3 years, following which all data will be deleted.

Who has reviewed the research?

My research has been approved by the Department of Psychology and Human Development Ethics Committee, Reference Number: (Ethical Approval Letter tbc). This means that the Committee's evaluation of this ethics application has been guided by the standards of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Who can I contact if I have any questions/concerns?

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Kehinde Brown at u3228684@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact my research supervisor Suzannah Hill. Department of Psychology and Human Development, School of Childhood and Social Care, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.
Email: S.Hill2@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of Ethics Committee: Dr Trishna Patel, Department of Psychology and Human Development, School of Childhood and Social Care, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.
(Email: t.patel@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet