



WAVERLEY ABBAY

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Research Participant Information Sheet

The following information is provided to help you give informed consent should you wish to take part in the research.

Research Question

How do therapists make sense of unplanned endings in counselling with midlife male clients?

Researcher's name and contact details

Martin Devitt

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Mobile: 07855 344141

Invitation

You are invited to take part in a research study exploring how therapists make sense of unplanned endings in counselling with midlife male clients (aged 40-60).

Please read this information carefully. It explains why the research is being done and what taking part would involve. Taking part is entirely voluntary.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is being conducted as part of my master's dissertation at Waverley Abbey College. It is interested in how therapists understand and make sense of the experience of one unplanned ending with a midlife male client.

For this study, **midlife** is defined as the age range 40-60, a life stage that may include challenges and transitions relating to work, purpose, responsibilities, relationships, and health.

The term **unplanned ending** is used in research literature but overlaps with related terms such as dropout, termination, and disengagement. In this study, the term will be explored in relation to how therapists understand this kind of ending and the meanings they attribute to it.

The study aims to explore how therapists understand the circumstances surrounding unplanned endings, how they interpret the meaning and significance of those endings, and what implications they may hold for practice and supervision in the UK counselling and psychotherapy context.

Why have I been approached?

You have been approached because you may meet the study criteria of therapists who:

- are a UK-based, qualified counsellor or psychotherapist (minimum Diploma level) aged 18 or over
- are in current private practice or agency practice
- are registered with a recognised professional body (e.g. BACP, UKCP, ACC or equivalent)
- have direct one-to-one therapist experience of working with male clients aged 40-60
- with experience of one unplanned ending with a male client aged 40-60 in the last three years

Do I have to take part?

No. You are invited but not obliged to take part in this research. If you decide not to participate, this will have no effect on your relationship with Waverley Abbey College, with me personally, or with any organisation through which you heard about the study.

If you do agree to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time (see below).

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part:

1. You will contact me directly using my WAC email address confirming your interest to participate and that you meet the study criteria.
2. I will send you a consent form and a short online screening questionnaire. Please complete the questionnaire and return the signed consent form to me.
3. If you meet the inclusion criteria and are selected, we will arrange a mutually convenient interview time using Microsoft Teams.
4. You will receive the interview schedule in advance, so you have time to think about one case you wish to discuss.
5. One week before the agreed date I will send you a secure Teams link.
6. At the start of the interview, I will check that you are in a private, uninterrupted space and remind you that you are free to pause, skip questions or stop at any time.
7. With your consent, the interview will be recorded using **audio only**.
8. After the interview, I will transcribe the recording and analyse the data using **Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)**.

What will it involve?

Taking part will involve:

- **One semi structured interview**
- held **online via Microsoft Teams**
- lasting approximately 45-60 minutes
- **no travel** being required

You will be asked to talk about **one unplanned ending** in your work with a midlife male client and your understanding of that ending. The interview will explore the counselling process, how the ending happened, what it meant to you, and any effect it may have had on your thinking or practice.

You will **not be asked to disclose the client's real name** or other identifying details. I will actively discourage this to protect client confidentiality. You may refer to the client using a pseudonym or a general label such as "the client."

There are no financial costs to you and there is no payment for participation.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Talking about an unplanned ending may bring up difficult feelings or unresolved professional concerns. You may also feel uncomfortable revisiting a counselling relationship that has stayed with you.

You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer. You may pause, take a break, or stop the interview at any time.

Although all reasonable steps will be taken to maintain confidentiality, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in exceptional circumstances where there is a legal or safeguarding duty to disclose, such as imminent risk of serious harm to yourself or another person.

If taking part leaves you distressed, there will be information and signposting to appropriate support in a debrief information sheet I send you after the interview. This will include:

- information on how to find a therapist via the **BACP Find a Therapist directory**
- encouragement to use your own supervision, counselling, or professional support where appropriate

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The possible benefits of taking part may be:

- an opportunity to reflect on a significant area of your practice
- space to think about an experience that may not often be discussed in depth
- a chance to contribute to knowledge about counselling endings, therapists' sense-making, and work with midlife male clients

If I agree to take part, can I change my mind?

Yes, you have the right to withdraw at any time. Participants can withdraw their participation in the research at any time and withdraw consent without giving reason or explanation. After **one to two weeks of completing the interview**, transcription and analysis of the interview data will begin. Whilst every effort will be taken to remove all data if consent is withdrawn at any point after, participants should be aware that it is usually impracticable to withdraw after in-depth analysis of the data and submission/publication of the research.

If you wish to withdraw, you can contact me using the email address above and, where practicable, your data will be removed from the dataset.

Will my data and personal information be kept anonymous and confidential?

Yes, all reasonable steps will be taken to keep your data confidential and anonymised.

- You will be assigned a **pseudonym**
- Any identifying details will be removed from the transcript
- You will be asked not to use real client names or identifying details
- Any quotations used in the dissertation or later publication will be anonymised

Your interview will be recorded as **audio only**. The recording will be stored securely using WAC systems and password-protected storage. The key linking your real name to your pseudonym will be kept separately from the research data.

Because you are a therapist speaking about real practice, there remains a small risk that a person could be indirectly identifiable through a combination of details. For this reason, identifying details will be minimised or changed where necessary.

What will happen to my data after I have taken part in the research?

All your data will be kept confidential and anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. All identifying details will be changed in any interview transcripts. Complete anonymity will also be maintained if any brief direct quotes from participants are used in the final MA dissertation or in a future publication.

The dissertation will be submitted to Waverley Abbey College as part of my MA programme and may be read by the internal and external examiners and stored in the College library or digital repository. Any future publication based on this research would use anonymised material only.

Who has reviewed the study?

This research has been reviewed and granted ethical approval by the Waverley Abbey College Research Ethics Committee.

How do I raise an issue or make a complaint if I am concerned?

If you wish to raise a concern or complaint, please contact me Martin Devitt via martin.devitt@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk. You are also welcome to raise a concern or complaint with my research supervisor, Christopher Steed who can be contact via chris.steed@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk, or the MA Programme Leader Dr Martin Stokley via martin.stokley@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk. You can also discuss any concerns or make a formal complaint with the Chairperson of the Waverley Abbey College Research Ethics Committee, Dr Martin Stokley, who can be contact via martin.stokley@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk. (For more information on the complaints procedures and policies, please contact Dr Martin Stokley).

What code of ethics or ethical framework does the researcher have to abide by?

I will abide by the Waverley Abbey College Research Ethics Policy and Procedures (a copy of the policy can be made available upon request). I will also adhere to the Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions and the Ethical Guidelines for Research in the Counselling Professions of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), and to the Data Protection Act 2018. I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and will handle all data in accordance with relevant data-protection guidance.

What will happen to the data I provide?

If you take part, the data collected will include your screening questionnaire responses, one audio-recorded interview, a written transcript of that interview, and researcher field notes. Basic personal and professional information will also be collected for recruitment, screening, and contextual purposes, such as your name, email address, age, gender, therapeutic qualification, years qualified, modality, professional body registration, current practice status, and practice setting. The interview will be recorded using audio only.

Your data will be stored securely on password-protected Waverley Abbey College systems and, where needed for analysis, on the researcher's password-protected laptop. Your name will be replaced with a pseudonym, and any identifying details will be removed from transcripts and written outputs. The key linking your real name to your pseudonym will be stored separately from the research data.

Your data will be processed in accordance with Waverley Abbey College's relevant data policies and procedures. For more information, please see the Data Privacy Notice below.

You have the right to ask to see any information gathered on you by contacting me on martin.devitt@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk. You also have the right to ask for information which you believe to be incorrect to be rectified. If you are concerned about the way your information is being handled, please email Waverley Abbey Colleges Data Protection Officer at simon.hawes@waverleyabbey.org. If you are still unhappy you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

In line with Waverley Abbey College policy, on completion of the course (or exit of the course), any raw data, such as, the audio recording of the research will be securely destroyed. The transcripts of the interviews will be kept for a period of 18 months after the end of the course by the researcher and then securely destroyed.

Waverley Abbey College - Research Data Privacy Policy

Our contact details:

Waverley Abbey Trust
Waverley Abbey House,
Waverley Lane,
Farnham,
Surrey,
GU9 8EP
Phone Number: +44 (0)1252 784 700

E-mail: simon.hawes@waverleyabbey.org

What type of information is collected?

As part of the course requirements in the final research module, the following information is collected and processed:

- Personal identifiers and characteristics, including, name, age, gender, number of years qualified, therapeutic modality, professional body registration number, occupation
- Contact details for use during the research process, such as email address and mobile phone number
- In-depth interview data, which will be audio recorded and a transcription of the recording will be created, written responses to a screening questionnaire

How we get the information and why we have it

We use the information that you have given us for research purposes as part of the course requirements of the MA in Professional Counselling (Theory & Practice). The personal information is used to complete the research on “How do therapists make sense of unplanned endings in counselling with midlife male clients?”

The personal information we process is provided to us directly by you for one of the following reasons:

- As part of your participation in my MA research project. The data will be collected, analysed and used solely for this research purpose.
- The data is collected via in-depth interviews that are audio recorded and a transcript is created from that recording; email; through completion of an online screening questionnaire.
- Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the lawful bases we rely on for processing this information are:

Your consent

You are able to remove your consent at any time. You can do this by contacting Martin Devitt at martin.devitt@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk.

Whilst every effort will be taken to remove all data if consent is withdrawn at any point after the research interview, it may be impracticable to withdraw all data after in-depth analysis of the data has commenced, and impractical to withdraw after submission/publication of the research.

What we do with the information we have

The data you provide is audio recorded and a transcription is made of that recording. This data will be analysed as part of the research process.

Although the raw data I collect from you will not usually be shared with anyone else, the data may be shared with my research supervisor, Christopher Steed at Waverley Abbey College, and, in rare circumstances, may be viewed by the programme's external examiner or other relevant assessors as part of the course requirements and relevant regulations under Middlesex University. In extreme circumstances, where there is imminent risk of harm or a legal obligation to disclose, data may be shared with relevant agencies and personnel.

In line with college policy, on completion of the course (or exit of the course), any raw research data, such as, the audio recording, will be securely destroyed. The transcripts of the interviews will be kept for a period of 18 months after the end of the course by the researcher and then securely destroyed.

How we store your information

Your information is securely stored in Waverley Abbey College supplied personal cloud file storage area and, on a password protected computer, in a locked cabinet, stored in the researcher's study.

We keep the following personal information until the end of the course.

- name
- age
- gender
- therapeutic qualification (e.g. diploma, bachelor, master)
- number of years qualified
- therapeutic modality
- professional body registration
- occupation
- type of therapeutic workplace practice (e.g. private practice; agency)

We will then dispose your information by deletion of all digital data and confidential shredding of physical written data.

In line with college policy, on completion of the course (or exit of the course), any raw research data, such as, the audio recording, will be securely destroyed. The transcripts of the interviews will be kept for a period of 18 months after the end of the course by the researcher and then securely destroyed.

Your data protection rights

Under data protection law, you have rights including:

Your right of access - You have the right to ask us for copies of your personal information.

Your right to rectification - You have the right to ask us to rectify information you think is inaccurate. You also have the right to ask us to complete information you think is incomplete.

Your right to erasure - You have the right to ask us to erase your personal information in certain circumstances.

Participants can withdraw their participation in the research at any time and withdraw their consent, and their data, without giving a reason or explanation. Approximately one week after the research interview, transcription and analysis of the data will begin. Whilst every effort will be taken to remove all data if consent is withdrawn at any point after the research interview, it may be impracticable to withdraw all data after in-depth analysis of the data has commenced, and impractical to withdraw after submission/publication of the research.

Your right to restriction of processing - You have the right to ask us to restrict the processing of your information in certain circumstances.

Your right to object to processing - You have the the right to object to the processing of your personal data in certain circumstances.

Your right to data portability - You have the right to ask that we transfer the information you gave us to another organisation, or to you, in certain circumstances.

You are not required to pay any charge for exercising your rights. If you make a request, we have one month to respond to you.

Please contact us at martin.devitt@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk if you wish to make a request.

How to complain

You can raise a concern or complaint to the data protection officer at Waverley Abbey College via: E-mail: simon.hawes@waverleyabbey.org

You can also complain to the ICO if you are unhappy with how we have used your data.

The ICO's address:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Helpline number: 0303 123 1113

Who do I contact for further information or if I have questions?

If you require and further information or have questions, please contact me on martin.devitt@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking time to consider taking part.