

# **Participant Information Sheet**

**Title of study:** ADHD and Limerence — a study of limerence experiences in adults with ADHD

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## **1. Invitation**

You are being invited to take part in a research study about how adults with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) experience limerence (an intense, often intrusive romantic fixation). Participation is voluntary and you can stop at any time. The study is undertaken to write an MSc Counselling and Psychotherapy at London Metropolitan University. Before you decide if you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what taking part involves. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

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

Limerence is described in the literature as involuntary, intrusive, and rumination-driven. While recent articles and social media content links ADHD and limerence, research has not explored in depth how adults with ADHD experience limerence or how ADHD features (for example, hyperfocus or impulsivity) influence it. This study aims to fill that gap and to produce findings that may inform counselling and psychotherapy practice.

## **3. Why have I been chosen to participate?**

You are being invited to participate in this study because you responded to the research advert. I welcome you to this study if you are an adult (18 years or older), have ADHD (formally diagnosed by a health care professional) and have current or past experience of limerence (an intense, often intrusive romantic fixation). I am hoping to have between 4 and 8 participants.

## **4. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information leaflet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. You are free to change your mind up to 14 days after the interview and without giving a reason.

Key safety reasons for not taking part are active psychosis, severe cognitive impairment or current risk that would make participation unsafe. If any of these reasons are true for you, please do not participate. You do not need to provide a reason.

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

This study involves the following stages:

**Screening:** A short email or phone screening to confirm you are 18+, have a formal diagnosis of ADHD and have current or past experience of limerence. I would like to ensure participant diversity as I strongly believe that all experiences matter so I may ask about your age, gender, sexual, relationship, ethnic, and cultural identities. You do not need to answer any questions you do not want to. The screening also checks safety to participate.

Screening questions:

1. Are you 18 years old or older?
2. Have you ever experienced an intense romantic fixation on someone where you found yourself thinking about them constantly, feeling very emotionally affected by small signs of interest or rejection, and strongly hoping they would feel the same way?
3. Have you been formally diagnosed with ADHD by a health care professional?
4. I may ask about your age, gender, sexual, relationship, ethnic, and cultural identities

Safety questions:

5. My priority is making sure the interview feels safe and manageable for you. I will now ask a few questions to check that you can meaningfully participate in the interview. Are you currently having any experiences, like hearing or seeing things others don't, or feeling very unsure about what's real, that might make an interview feel difficult or overwhelming?
6. Do you feel confident that you can follow the conversation, reflect on your experiences, and communicate comfortably during the interview?
7. I want to check that taking part would feel emotionally safe for you. Are you currently dealing with any crises or risks, like feeling unsafe, overwhelmed, or at risk of harming yourself, that might make participation difficult?

**Consent:** You will be asked to sign a consent form confirming you understand the study and agree to recording and use of your anonymised data.

**Interview:** One semi-structured interview (60–90 minutes) by video call (MS Teams). The interview will be audio/video recorded (with your permission). Topics include your experience of limerence, how it felt, the role of ADHD, and the impact on relationships, daily life and identity. You may pause, take breaks, or stop the interview at any time. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to.

If technical difficulties (e.g. internet failure) occur during the interview, we will make 3 attempts at 5 minute intervals to reconnect to the MS Teams video call. If this fails, we will use the MS Teams call dial-in phone numbers. We may need to reschedule if the technical difficulties persist. Communication with me during technical difficulties will be done by mobile phone. My contact details will be provided in the Consent Form.

**After the interview:** You will receive a short debrief sheet and signposting to support services. You may be sent a short summary of findings if you opt in.

## **6. What are the benefits of taking part?**

There will be no direct benefits to participants, however we hope the results of the study will help us to understand the experience of limerence in adults with ADHD and to produce findings that may inform counselling and psychotherapy practice.

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

I have taken all measures to minimise any risk to you. All information will be treated confidentially and any data included in the research will be anonymised. The main risk is that you become distressed during, or after, the interview because we may touch on unresolved trauma or you may overshare. If you become distressed during the interview, I will pause and check you are ok to continue. If you are not ok, I will stop the interview, and we will agree the best next action. If you become distressed after the interview you will be able to contact the support services in the debrief sheet and you can withdraw from the study up to 14 days following the interview.

## **8. Will my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

I have taken all measures to minimise any risk to you. Original video recordings will be retained in London Metropolitan University's cloud server until after my degree has been conferred (expected July 2027). A transcript of interviews in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for a further two years after

this. Please note that by law we are obliged to report any inadvertent discovery relating to your data as required under UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Everything you share in this study will be kept confidential and stored securely. Your name and any identifying details will be removed from the data. However, there are a few situations where I cannot keep information confidential. These limits are set by professional ethical guidelines and UK law.

I would need to break confidentiality if:

- You tell me something that makes me believe you or someone else is at imminent serious risk of harm.
- You share information about ongoing abuse, exploitation, or a situation where a child or vulnerable adult may be unsafe.
- You disclose information that I am legally required to report (for example, certain criminal offences).

If any of these situations arise, I would aim to discuss this with you first whenever possible, explain what needs to happen, and involve you in the next steps. Outside of these specific circumstances, everything you share will remain confidential.

## **9. What will happen to the results of this research?**

The information from this study may be published in scientific papers and on public registries. If this is the case, your identity will remain confidential, and no one will know that you took part in the study.

## **10. What do I do if I have any further questions?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in the study, please ask me on the email above.

## **11. What is the lawful basis to use my personal data?**

The legal basis for processing your personal data is Article 6(1)(e) of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The legal basis for processing your sensitive personal data (if relevant to the study) is Article 9(2)(j) GDPR.

## **12. What are my rights in relation to your use of my personal data?**

The legal basis for processing your personal data is Article 6(1)(e) of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), as amended by The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. If you would like more information about how your data will be processed at London

Metropolitan University in accordance with these regulations, please visit the following link: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/about/policies/data-protection/>

You are entitled to request any of the rights below unless it would make it impossible or very difficult to carry out the research study:

- The right to access to your personal data;
- The right to receive a copy of your personal data;
- The right to ask us to restrict our use of your personal data;
- The right to ask us to correct inaccurate information about you; or
- The right to ask us to delete your personal data.

You are entitled to object to any further processing of the information we hold about you (except where it is de-identified). You can learn more about data protection in relation to this study by contacting the researcher or the supervisor (contact details above), and you can exercise these rights by contacting the Data Protection Officer at [dsar@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:dsar@londonmet.ac.uk). Please note that these rights relate to data which could identify you (personal data). If your data has been anonymized, we will not be able to access or delete it as we will have no way of being able to link the data to you.

### **13. Time limit to withdraw from the study**

You can exercise your right to withdraw from the study up to 14 days following the interview as after this time your anonymised data will be analysed and included in the research.

### **14. Ethics review and approval**

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP) of the University and conforms to the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2021).

### **15. Keep this document for your own record**

I suggest that you keep this information sheet for your records.