Participant Information Sheet for Exploring the Use and Development of Vignettes in Mental Health Literacy (MHL) Assessment: A Delphi Study

(Version 3, July 2026)

Study title: Exploring the Use and Development of Vignettes in Mental Health Literacy (MHL) Assessment: A Delphi Study

University of Dundee School Research Ethics Committee Application/Approval Number: UOD-SREC-SHS-2026-016

Invitation to participate

You are invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not you would like to participate in this study, it is important that you read the information provided below. This will help you understand why the research is being carried out, how it will be conducted, what your participation will involve and how this will benefit the study. Please contact the researcher by using the below contact information if anything is unclear or if you have any questions.

Who is conducting the research?

This study is being conducted by Xiaoxue Cui, a PhD student at the University of Dundee, school of health science, under the supervision of Dr Jan Boehnke, Dr Clair Gamble and Dr Sreekanth Thekkumkara. This study forms part of the principal researcher's PhD project, which focuses on how vignettes are developed and applied in mental health literacy assessment among lay adult people.

Principal researcher contact: 2584463@dundee.ac.uk

Who is funding the research?

This research is self-funded.

What is the purpose of the research?

The aim of this study is to identify what recommendations people think are important when developing mental health stories used in mental health research.

Mental health literacy simply means understanding mental health problems, recognising when someone's struggling and knowing where to get help. Researchers often use short stories or scenarios (called vignettes) that describe a person in real life settings to explore how people understand, think about and respond to different situations. Although this method has a long history, we found there were no clear guideline for designing them. We gathered considerations from mental health studies and other fields that also use vignette, created a list of recommendations, and would like to know which of them you think are important.

We recognise that such a list requires input from the people involved. In the current project, we aim to gather the perspectives from professionals, researchers and individuals with lived experience of mental health challenges. We are using a Delphi survey, a research method in which a group of people is asked to share their opinions across more than one round, so that we can see where people agree or disagree. The aim is to know which recommendations are considered important by people who joined this survey.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been contacted because you belong to one of the following groups whose perspectives are important for the development of vignettes in MHL assessment: mental health professionals, researchers with experience in vignette methodology, or individuals with lived experience of mental health conditions. Each group provides valuable insight to help ensure that vignettes are clear, realistic and appropriate for assessing mental health literacy. While this study is mainly based in the UK, we welcome perspectives from international mental health professionals and researchers.

Do I have to take part?

No, participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any time up to four weeks after the end of the second Delphi round without giving a reason. After submitting the survey, your responses are

identifiable for the research team until four weeks after the end of the second Delphi round. After that, we will remove identifiable data and anonymise the dataset. After that step, withdrawal from the study will no longer be possible.

What will happen if I take part?
This study uses a Delphi survey to understand agreement between participants. Such a study is conducted in rounds in which participants are asked to state whether or not they agree with presented options and provide their own input. Our study will involve two rounds of an online survey via an online survey platform. Each round will take approximately 30 minutes to complete, with around one month between survey rounds. You will be asked to answer the questionnaire, share your opinions, and provide comments.

Are there any risks in taking part?
In each Delphi round, you will need to provide your email address to indicate willingness to participate, to connect responses between rounds, and for the research team to send reminders. With these email addresses, responses will be identifiable to the research team until four weeks after the completion of the second Delphi round. After that time, all identifiable information, including participants' email addresses, will be removed and the dataset will be anonymised. However, there remains a small risk of deductive identification in cases where group sizes are very small or where there is a high attrition rate within a particular group. To minimise the risk of identification, the research team will implement the following measures:

- During the Delphi study, we will only present overall results from the groups of participants, including overall ratings and written comments.
- During the study period, access to the dataset will also be restricted to the research team and stored on secure institutional systems.
- After completion of the study, overall results, summaries of participants' comments and anonymised quotes may be presented in research publications or presentations.

Secondly, please note that this is a knowledge generation study, rather than a mental health intervention or crisis-support service, the research team is not in the position to provide any individual advice, diagnosis, treatment, ongoing support, follow-up, or crisis intervention.

However, we acknowledge that reviewing mental health-related scenarios (vignettes) may potentially cause mild emotional discomfort for some participants. As such, you are free to skip any questions you do not wish to answer, take a short break from the survey, or withdraw from the survey at any time prior to submitting a survey without giving a reason. You are also free not to take part in the second round of the survey.

If you experience distress and live in the UK, you can seek support from the following resources:

- Local GP: contact your GP or local mental health services.
- Call 111: if you need support with mental health distress or require urgent care outside GP working hours.
- Mind: access online resources at www.mind.org.uk

If you are based outside the UK and require support, please contact your local healthcare provider, mental health service, or appropriate emergency support service.

The survey also includes free-text boxes where you may provide additional comments about your responses. Please do not include any personal identifiable information in any free-text space. If you choose to use these boxes to describe emotional difficulties, we will review whether any changes are needed to reduce any unintentional distress for further participants.

Such disclosures are not anticipated in this knowledge generation study. However, in the rare event that a free-text comment raises a safety concern for you or others, we may try to contact you using the email address linked to your response (until anonymisation takes place) to check on your welfare and may also seek advice from the University of Dundee Safeguarding Team and report the concern in accordance with University's Safeguarding Policy.

Your responses will normally be treated confidentially; however, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where a safety concern is identified or where disclosure is required by law.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
There is no direct personal benefit, and no payment or financial incentive will be offered for participation. However, your may request a certificate of participation at the end of the final Delphi round, which represents the research team acknowledging that your contribution is valuable for shaping the final list of recommendations for vignette design in mental health literacy assessment and may inform future reporting guidance development.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All data collected will be confidential. If you provide an email address to indicate your willingness to participate, your responses will be identifiable to the research team until four weeks after the end of the second Delphi round. During this period, data will be stored securely, and access will be restricted to the research team only. After this point, all data will be anonymised and no longer linkable to identifiable individuals. No identifiable personal data will be published. Confidentiality will only be broken if required by law.

What will happen to the information I provide?
Once the Delphi study is completed, all research data- including the overall rating and summary of participants' comments- will be stored securely in the university's secure data repository for 10 years. The anonymised data may be made available to other researchers for secondary analysis. In all outputs, quantitative information will only be presented in aggregated form, and verbatim quotes will only be presented in anonymised form, so that individual participants cannot be identified by other people.

Data Protection
Data will be collected via the Jisc online survey platform across two Delphi rounds. Each round will be distributed using a separate survey link. The survey contains free-text fields, but none of them are designed to request personal data, please do not provide any personally identifiable information in any open-text place. This study involves the processing of limited special category personal data only for eligibility screening purpose, specifically self-reported mental health history. No detailed clinical or treatment information will be collected.

The University asserts that it is lawful for it to process your personal data in this project as the processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller.

The University also asserts that is lawful for it to process special categories of your personal data in this project as the processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes in accordance with Article 89(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation. The University of Dundee is the data controller for the personal and/or special categories of personal data processed in this project.

The University respects your rights and preferences in relation to your data and if you wish to update, access, erase, or limit the use of your information, please let us know by emailing MHL_DELPHI@dundee.ac.uk
Please note that some of your rights may be limited where personal data is processed for research, but we are happy to discuss that with you. If you wish to complain about the use of your information please contact the University's Data Protection Officer in the first instance (email: dataprotection@dundee.ac.uk). You may also wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (https://ico.org.uk/).
You can find more information about the ways that personal data is used at the University at:
https://www.dundee.ac.uk/information-governance/data-protection.

Is there someone else I can complain to?
If you wish to complain about the way the research has been conducted please contact the Convener of the University Research Ethics Committee (https://www.dundee.ac.uk/research-governance-policy/non-clinical-research-ethics-contacts). You have the option to email the Convener or leave a voicemail.

Alternative formats

The researcher should offer to provide a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form in alternative formats (e.g. large print, Braille). Advice on alternative formats can be obtained from Disability Services (email: altformats@dundee.ac.uk).