



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study title: A qualitative exploration of UK private practice psychotherapists' experiences of working with older clients aged 65 and over.

Contact person: Elizabeth Ayers

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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 at the above email.

Who am I?

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

What is the purpose of the research?

I am conducting research into how qualified UK psychotherapists describe and make sense of their experiences working therapeutically with clients aged 65 and over in private practice.

The aim is to develop a deeper understanding of how therapists experience this work, what stands out for them and how they reflect on their own practice in this context.

The findings may contribute to professional reflection, training and future discussions about therapeutic work with older adult clients.

Why have I been invited to take part?

To address the study aims, I am inviting qualified psychotherapists to take part in this research. Participants must have a minimum of two years' post-qualification experience, be

currently registered with a recognised professional body, and have experience of working therapeutically with at least one client aged 65 and over in the previous twelve months. This study focuses specifically on therapists working in private or independent practice settings. If you meet these criteria, you are eligible to take part in this study.

Your participation would be valuable; however, 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 first be asked to read this Participant Information Sheet and complete a consent form.

You will also be asked to complete a short pre-interview questionnaire (approximately 3-5 minutes) via Microsoft Forms, which will collect general professional background information (e.g., years of practice and therapeutic modality).

You will then be invited to take part in one semi-structured interview lasting approximately 50-60 minutes. The interview will take place online via Microsoft Teams, at a time that is convenient for you.

The interview will be similar to an informal professional conversation. You will be asked about:

- How you understand the emotional and relational dynamics of the work
- How you make sense of ageing and later-life distress in therapeutic encounters with older adult clients?
- Any reflections you might have regarding your own personal and professional experiences with this work

Example questions may include:

- “Can you tell me about your experience working with older adult clients?”
- “What feels important in building a therapeutic relationship with older adult clients?”
- “How, if at all, does your own experience of ageing fit into this work for you?”

The interview will be **audio-recorded using Microsoft Teams** to ensure an accurate record of your responses. No video recordings will be retained.

Participation will take approximately **50–60 minutes in total**.

There is **no payment or compensation** for taking part.

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 interview, you can do so by informing the researcher verbally during the interview or by contacting the researcher via email. 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 study, provided that this request is made within three weeks 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?

This study is considered low risk. However, reflecting on your clinical work and perspectives on ageing may lead to mild emotional discomfort.

To minimise this, you will be informed in advance about the nature of the interview topics. You are free to decline to answer any question, and you can pause or stop the interview at any time without giving a reason.

Although you may already have access to professional support, this will not be assumed. If you do experience any discomfort after taking part, information about relevant support services will be provided in the debrief sheet.

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

You will not be identified in any data collected, in any materials resulting from the data, or in any written reports of the research. You will be assigned a unique participant number (e.g., Participant 1), and any identifying details will be removed during transcription. Your contact details (e.g., name and email address) will be stored separately from your interview data in a password-protected, encrypted folder on UEL's OneDrive. These details will be deleted after the withdrawal period has ended.

The pre-interview questionnaire responses, interview recording and transcript will be securely stored on UEL's password-protected OneDrive system. Data will only be transferred using secure UEL systems, such as UEL email and Microsoft Teams.

Only the researcher will have access to the raw data (pre-interview questionnaire responses and audio recordings). The research supervisor will have access to anonymised transcripts and anonymised background data only.

Your interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. During transcription, all names and identifying details will be removed or changed to protect your identity.

Participants will be advised not to disclose identifiable information about clients or colleagues during the interview. If such information is shared, the researcher will gently intervene and guide the discussion away from identifiable data.

Anonymised data may be viewed by the research supervisor and university examiners for the purposes of assessment.

After the study has been completed:

- Audio recordings will be deleted once transcription has been completed
- Personal contact details will be deleted after the withdrawal period
- Anonymised transcripts will be securely stored for up to **2 years** and then permanently deleted

Your contact details will **not** be retained for future research studies.

Confidentiality may need to be broken if there is a disclosure of serious risk of harm to yourself or others, or where there is a legal or ethical obligation to report concerns.

Although the researcher is a qualified psychotherapist, care will be taken to maintain clear boundaries between the researcher's role and therapeutic practice, ensuring the interview remains a research space rather than a therapeutic one.

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 at the University of East London. This thesis may be stored in the University's repository. 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 and professional or training materials. In all material produced, your identity will remain anonymous, in that, it will not be possible to identify you personally. Any personally identifying information will be removed or replaced. However, due to the small sample size and specific professional group, there is a small possibility that participants could be indirectly identifiable.

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 Dr Luis Jimenez for a maximum of 2 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, School of Childhood and Social Care Ethics Committee. 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 me.

Elizabeth Ayers

Email: u1928810@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact my research supervisor Dr Luis Jimenez Department of Psychology and Human Development, School of Childhood and Social Care, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

Email: L.jimenez@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