

# PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM



**TO: Adult participants on the autism spectrum**

## Plain Language Statement

**Date: 11/05/2021**

**Full Project Title: Neurocognitive predictors of everyday fluctuations in mental health in autism**

**Principal Researcher: Dr Natalia Albein-Urios**

**Associate Researcher(s): Prof. Peter Enticott, Prof. Mark Bellgrove, Prof. Mario Alvarez-Jimenez, Mr Daniel Ho**

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Thank you for taking the time to read this Information Statement.

This document contains detailed information about the research project. Its purpose is to explain to you as clearly as possible all the procedures involved in the project before you decide whether or not to take part in it. Please read this information carefully. Feel free to ask questions about anything in the document. You may also wish to discuss the project with a relative or friend.

Once you understand what is involved in the project and if you agree to take part in it, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form. By signing the Consent Form, you indicate that you understand the information and that you give your consent to participate in the project.

**Participation in this study is voluntary.** If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with Deakin University.

## STUDY OVERVIEW

You are invited to take part in this research project, which aims to investigate how social and emotional ability relates to mental health in people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). For some people with ASD it is common to have trouble when interacting in social contexts. Some people with ASD also have difficulties controlling or “regulating” their emotions. These difficulties can affect the mental health of young adults with ASD, which in turn might have an impact on their quality of life. It is hoped that this study will lead to an improved understanding of the role of social and emotional processes in mental health in young adults with ASD, which will also help us to develop new tools for preventing mental health problems in ASD.



## **WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?**

All data collection will happen online, either via ZOOM, online platforms or by mobile application. You will participate in an initial interview over ZOOM with the research team. In this interview we will ask you questions about yourself, including your medical history, mental health, and demographics (e.g., age, gender, substance use, etc.) In this session, you will also have to complete a couple of questionnaires that may describe some of your behaviours (e.g., “I make careless errors when completing tasks”). This first interview will take around 60 minutes.

After this initial interview, we will provide you with a unique de-identifying code to access the assessment battery. The battery is made up of several assessments; some of these assessments are questionnaires, while others are computer tasks. In these assessments, there will be questions about your personality and the way you behave in certain social situations (e.g., “I am usually aware of how others are feeling” or “my mood changes frequently” or “I have angry outbursts”). While completing these assessments, we will ask that you adhere to certain environmental parameters (e.g., quiet room). This session will take around 90 minutes, breaks included.

After this assessment session, you will be asked to download a mobile app. This app will ask you about how you feel from a list of 8 different emotions (e.g., anger/happiness) over a period of 15 days. You will do this four times each day, and each time it will only take one minute to reply.

## **RISKS AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS**

You are not expected to receive any direct benefit from participating in this study. However, your involvement in this project will help to better understand how social and emotional processes are linked to mental health problems in young adults with ASD. It will also help to develop new tools to help recognise and assist those at higher risk of poorer mental health. Although there are not potential risks associated with the participation in this study, we will provide the details of helplines and websites (e.g., <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>) in case you experience any form of distress during the course of the study. The study research team will also be in touch with you during and between the administration of the tasks in case you require any support.

## **EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

It is hoped that this information will lead to a better understanding of the unique predictors of mental health in those with ASD, and promote the development of new interventions and tools for reducing the risk of poorer mental health in ASD.



## **PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Participation in this study will be confidential. All responses will be treated confidentially. Your data will not contain your name or any identifying information, and it will only be accessible to members of the research team listed above. We require your name and signature on the consent form, but these will not be linked to your responses or the other information collected from you. The consent forms will be securely stored in the School of Psychology at Deakin University. For this study, only group data will be reported. The results of this study will be published in scientific journals. Deakin University will also contribute to disseminate findings in the community via its media office.

## **REIMBURSEMENT AND FUNDING**

Participants will be reimbursed a \$60 voucher to compensate for their time commitment.

## **WHAT IF I DECIDE TO STOP PARTICIPATION DURING THE STUDY?**

If you wish to withdraw from the study at any stage, your decision will not be questioned and any information that you have provided to that point will not be used.

## **WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?**

This research is being conducted within the Cognitive Neuroscience Unit (CNU), School of Psychology, Deakin University. Dr Natalia Albein-Urios is the principal researcher. You can contact her on (03) 9251 7813 or via email ([natalia.albeinurios@deakin.edu.au](mailto:natalia.albeinurios@deakin.edu.au)).

## **COMPLAINTS**

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact:

The Human Research Ethics Office, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, [research-ethics@deakin.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@deakin.edu.au)

Please quote project number [\[2021-103\]](#).