



Participant Information Sheet

Title: Can walking enhance the effects of written emotional disclosure?

Supervisor: Professor Elizabeth Broadbent

Researcher: Michael Bannerman

Past research has shown that written emotional disclosure about past stressful experiences can help people process the experience and improve mood. You are invited to take part in a study that explores whether the addition of walking to written emotional disclosure can have further benefits on mood. Written emotional disclosure is a process where the participant writes about a past emotional or stressful event and, through the process of writing, is able to think about and rationalise the experience and better fit it within their self-schema. It has regularly been used as a research paradigm for over 30 years and, due to its significant and powerful effect, has been adapted into a number of standard psychological therapies.

This project is being carried out by Michael Bannerman, a master's candidate in the Department of Psychological Medicine at the University of Auckland, and Professor Elizabeth Broadbent (Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Auckland), who is supervising the project.

It is important that you read this document carefully so that you can make an informed decision about whether you wish to participate.

Purpose of the study: The aim of the study is to explore whether walking after written emotional disclosure will have a beneficial effect on mood compared to written emotional disclosure alone.

Your rights as a participant: Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw from this research project at any time during the session and until two weeks after participation without giving a reason and without any negative consequences. If you withdraw from the study, your data will be removed. If you are a student of the researchers, we give our assurance that your participation or non-participation in this study will have no effect on your grades or relationship with the University and that you may contact your academic head should you feel that this assurance has not been met. You will be given a copy of this document to keep.

If you wish to withdraw for any reason, please email Michael Bannerman (mban542@aucklanduni.ac.nz). You may withdraw from the study up to 2 weeks after completing the 4-week follow-up questionnaire.

Eligibility: We are recruiting participants who are between 18 and 50 years old, who have no walking disability and are able to walk at around 5kmh (which is a normal walking speed for most people). Participants must be fluent in English and able to type on a regular computer

and have experienced a stressful or emotionally challenging event in their lives. Participants must be able to come to the University of Auckland Grafton campus to complete the procedures below.

Procedure: If you choose to participate, we will ask you to complete a demographic questionnaire, a questionnaire to assess your current mood state, and then undertake three 20-minute emotional writing exercises which include instructions on how to approach the writing. The products of the writing session will not be read by a person, instead they will be analysed by a computer programme called LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry Word Count), which will analyse the language you use to determine changes in the way you were writing. We may also ask you to walk for a short time. We will ask you to complete a questionnaire at the end of the final session and at a 4-week follow-up to help determine the effects on your mood. The follow-up will use the same mood questionnaire as you completed when you first arrived and will be conducted online, so there will be no need to come to the University again.

The total time commitment from you is approximately 2 hours plus 5-10 minutes to complete a follow-up questionnaire after 4 weeks.

As a thank you from us, for both your much appreciated support and effort in completing the study, you will receive a \$30 Countdown voucher as koha.

Benefits: Many people who complete the written emotional disclosure process experience improvements in mood within a week of completion.

Risks and discomforts: The procedures outlined in this protocol are non-invasive and present a risk that is comparable to the minimal risk and harm that you would encounter in normal daily life. It is not uncommon for individuals to report feeling somewhat sad during or following a writing session. Similar to watching a sad movie, these feelings typically subside within a couple of hours. If you feel extremely upset about a writing topic, simply stop writing or change topics. You are also invited to contact the researchers, or the University of Auckland Health and Counselling Service, or your own doctor or medical centre if you want to seek support. If you identify as Māori, you may wish to consult with whānau or kaumatua within your hapū to develop greater cultural awareness of the tikanga around potential risks and discomforts this procedure may invoke. If you wish to speak to someone at the University for this support you are welcome to contact Michael Bannerman on mban542@aucklanduni.ac.nz who will help you to contact someone who can support you using appropriate kaupapa and tikanga Māori.

Data storage: When you have signed the consent form, the researcher will open an envelope with a note in it that includes a random number. You will use this number on all of the documents, forms and screens that you fill in. When you have completed the exercises for the day, you should take the number home with you and ensure that you can use it again when we do the follow-up at 4 weeks.

All of the data that we collect and store about you will be linked to this primary key (the random number) and at no time will your name or other identification be linked to that number. In addition, all the data we collect will be stored in password protected files on secure servers at Qualtrics. All data will be destroyed after 10 years.

Confidentiality: All your personal information will remain strictly confidential. Your data (including writing) will only be stored with your participant number and not your name. Your

writing will only be analysed by a computer programme called LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry Word Count), not by a person.

Results: A summary of the results of this study will be sent to you if you wish. As it takes some time to analyse the results of the studies, it may be more than a year after you participate before you receive this information.

Incidental Findings: This study uses a questionnaire that asks you to consider your mood state and to provide a self-report evaluation of how you are feeling. This is not a formal assessment of depression or anxiety, simply a measure of mood. We will provide a list of possible avenues to seek support to all participants should you wish to seek support.

We appreciate the time you have taken to read this invitation. If you have any further questions, please contact:

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For concerns of an ethical nature, you can contact the
Chair of the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee at ahrec@auckland.ac.nz or at
373 7599 ext 83711, or at Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee, The University
of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.

“Approved by the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee on 17/03/2023 for three
years. Reference number AH25540.”