

Ethics reference number: 2627271



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Contact person: Kara Rosenberg, Msc. Psychology Candidate & Trainee Therapist
Email: u2627271@uel.ac.uk

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 on the above email.

Who am I?

My name is Kara Rosenberg. I am a postgraduate student in the Department of Psychology and Human Development at the University of East London (UEL) where I am pursuing an MSc in Psychology. As part of my studies, I am conducting research and invite you to participate.

What is the purpose of the research?

I am conducting research to better understand how people who experience intrusive thoughts as part of OCD make sense of their reassurance seeking, and how they feel this affects their ability to start or stay engaged in therapy. I am interested in hearing directly from people with lived experience about how this process feels to them.

In the longer term, the findings may help improve understanding of intrusive-thought dominant OCD and support therapists, clinicians and other mental health professionals in developing approaches that feel more accessible and supportive for people seeking treatment.

Why have I been invited to take part?

To address the aims of this study, I am inviting adults who identify as having OCD and who experience intrusive thoughts and reassurance seeking to take part. If you are aged 18 or over, experience intrusive thoughts, engage in any form of reassurance seeking (either from others or internally), and have sought or received some form of help or therapy, you are eligible to participate.

A formal diagnosis of OCD is not required. Participation is open to anyone who feels these experiences describe them and who is comfortable discussing them in an online interview.

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 be invited to attend a one-to-one online interview lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The interview will take place via Microsoft Teams at a time that is convenient for you. You will need access to a private space and a device with internet connection.

The interview will feel like an informal conversation. You will be asked open questions about your experiences of intrusive thoughts, reassurance seeking, and any experiences you have had with seeking help or engaging in therapy. There are no right or wrong answers; I am interested in your personal experiences and views.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded so that it can be transcribed accurately. The recording will not be shared publicly and will be securely stored. You may pause, skip questions, or stop the interview at any time.

There is no payment for taking part.

Can I change my mind?

Yes. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without giving a reason and without any disadvantage.

If you would like to withdraw during the interview, you can simply tell me and the interview will stop immediately. You do not have to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with.

You may also request to withdraw your data after the interview has taken place. You can do this at any time within 3 weeks of the interview. If you withdraw within this period, all your data (including recordings and transcripts) will be deleted and will not be used in the research. Once analysis has started, it may not be possible to remove your anonymised data, as it may already be included in the development of themes.

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

There are no physical risks associated with taking part in this study. However, discussing intrusive thoughts or experiences of reassurance seeking and therapy may feel emotionally uncomfortable for some people.

You are not required to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable, and you may pause or stop the interview at any time. The interview will be conducted sensitively and at your pace. I am a trainee therapist and experienced in discussing sensitive topics, but the interview is not therapy. Information about support services will be provided in the debrief sheet. If you decide to withdraw from the study at any stage, you are still encouraged to access these support services if needed.

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

All information you provide will be treated as strictly confidential. You will not be identified in any transcript, analysis, dissertation, or publication arising from this research. A pseudonym will be used in place of your real name, and any identifying details (such as names of people, locations) will be removed during transcription.

Personal contact details (such as your email address) will be stored separately from the research data in a password-protected file on an encrypted UEL OneDrive account. All communication will take place via my secure UEL email address. Contact details will be deleted once data collection is complete.

Interview recordings will be securely stored on UEL OneDrive and deleted after transcription and accuracy checking. Only anonymised transcripts will be used for analysis and uploaded into NVivo. Only the researcher will have access to identifiable data (e.g., recordings or contact details). My supervisor may view anonymised transcripts or coded material for guidance. Examiners will only see anonymised extracts included in the final dissertation.

Identifiable data will not be retained long term.

Confidentiality may only need to be broken if you disclose information suggesting a serious risk of harm to yourself or others. In such circumstances, I may need to follow university safeguarding procedures.

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. The thesis will be publicly available on UEL's online Repository. Findings may also be disseminated to a range of audiences (e.g., academics, clinicians, public, etc.) through journal articles, conference presentations, talks, etc. In all material produced, your identity will remain anonymous, in that, it will not be possible to identify you personally. Pseudonyms will be used and personal identifiable data will be stored separately from anonymised transcripts.

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 Ian Tucker for a maximum of 3 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 Ethics Committee, Reference Number: 2627271. 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.

Kara Rosenberg
U2627271@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact my research supervisor Ian Tucker.

Department of Psychology and Human Development, School of Childhood and Social Care, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

Email: i.tucker@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