

Online Survey Participant Information Form

Project title: Individual differences in emotional responses to social isolation

Name of Researchers: Professor Colin MacLeod, Dr Julie Ji, Dr Julian Basanovic

Invitation

Many members of our community face the challenge of experiencing social isolation to various degrees, from strict self-isolation/quarantine (e.g. during a global pandemic), to practising socially distancing from others for health or other reasons. To safeguard the mental wellbeing of those who are experiencing social isolation, we must come together to share and combine knowledge of our individual experiences so that we can identify and help those most vulnerable to the mental health impacts of social isolation.

Aim of the Study (What is the project about?)

This research study aims to better understand the factors that contribute to people's mental wellbeing during, and after, periods of social isolation. To achieve this aim, we need information on people's first-hand experiences of various degrees of social isolation, from undergoing strict self-isolation (quarantine), to practising social distancing from others.

Eligibility: Participation is open to people in Australia aged 18 years and over, who are either:

- 1) Currently in, or are about to begin, a period of strict self-isolation (quarantine), or
- 2) Currently practising social distancing, but are not in strict self-isolation

What is self-isolation (quarantine), and how is it different from social-distancing?

Self-isolation (quarantine) means you are staying indoors for at least 14-days (in your home, hotel room, or other accommodation) and not going out into public spaces or visiting other private spaces. When you self-isolate, you do not go to the shops, even to buy food, medicine or groceries. You will be likely be relying on family or friends to buy supplies for you or ordering them online for delivery. Self-isolation (self-quarantine) can be mandatory or voluntary.

- Mandatory: You may be in mandatory quarantine or following government or medical advice to self-isolate, because: you have COVID-19; or have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19; or have arrived in Australia after midnight on 15 March 2020 or entered an Australian State or Territory after border closure.
- Voluntary: You may be choosing to self-isolate because you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, or are awaiting COVID-19 test results, or for other reasons.

Social distancing means you are staying home but going outside when necessary, such as shopping for food, exercising, for medical appointments, or going to work if you are not working from home. You practice good hygiene and keep 1.5 metres away from others when outside the home.

What does participation involve?

If you are eligible and choose to take part, you will be invited to complete brief online surveys daily over a 14-day period, or until whenever your current self-isolation ends). You will also be invited to complete up to 4 follow-up surveys over a 6-month period. Only an email address is required to identify your responses across surveys, no names, date of birth or other identifying information will be obtained, The online surveys ask about your demographic background, and experiences of emotions, styles of thinking, and behaviours. The total time commitment for this study is approximately 2.5 hours. The schedule of surveys is listed below:

- 1) Registration survey - demographics & social-isolation context (15 minutes)
- 2) Initial baseline survey - questionnaires + brief problem solving exercise* (20 minutes)
- 3) Daily surveys (days 1-6, 8-13) – brief questionnaires (5 minutes)
- 4) Weekly survey (day 7, 14) - questionnaires (15 minutes)

*Brief problem-solving exercise: You will be presented with up to 2 scenarios likely to arise due to COVID-19. The scenarios have a negative beginning and a positive ending, and you will be asked to describe the steps you would take to achieve the positive ending.

Following the daily survey study period, you will also be asked to complete 4 follow-up surveys (15 minutes each) across the following 6-months period. You will be invited to each of the four follow-up surveys 2 weeks, 6 weeks, 12 weeks, and 24 weeks after you complete the daily survey period.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study

Please be aware that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part in this study you will remain free to withdraw from the study at any time, without prejudice and without the need to provide reason or justification. Should you choose to withdraw then you can request that records of your participation be destroyed.

Your privacy

The responses you provide will be stored securely, separately from identifying information. All data collected will be kept strictly confidential and will not be released unless the investigators are required to do so by law. Upon completion of this research programme, the collected data may be used to produce research reports in the form of peer-reviewed scientific publications and non-academic reports for the public. Collected data will not be shared with anyone who is not an academic research collaborator not directly approved by the Ethics committee. No identification information will be used in any report written about the study. All data will be kept in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Possible Benefits

There are no direct benefits from participating in this research, however your first-hand experiences will be helping scientists understand factors underpinning mental health risk and resilience during periods of self-isolation (due to the current COVID-19 pandemic or for other reasons). Research like this help to inform the development of novel interventions to assist those who are vulnerable to mental health deterioration.

Possible Risks and Risk Management Plan

Participation in this research study will involve only the completion of surveys. As such there is only limited foreseeable risk associated with this research. Whilst some people may find it helpful to share their feelings, thoughts, or behaviours, some may find it unpleasant. You will be reminded that completion of surveys is voluntary and can be discontinued at any point. If you are concerned about your physical health or mental health, we advise you to contact your general practitioner. The following mental health resources and contacts are also available to you:

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

EHeadspace (for participants 18-25 years): 1800 650 890; <https://www.eheadspace.org.au>

Mental Health Emergency Response Line (WA): 1800 676 822

Contacts

Who are the researchers? This research is being carried out by Dr Julie Ji, Dr Julian Basanovic, and Professor Colin MacLeod within the University of Western Australia's School of Psychological Science, in collaboration with the Forrest Research Foundation and The Minderoo Foundation.

If you have any questions or concerns in relation to the content of this study, you may discuss this with the researchers via email at carestudy@uwa.edu.au.

Sincerely,
Professor Colin MacLeod

Approval to conduct this research has been provided by the University of Western Australia, in accordance with its ethics review and approval procedures. Any person considering participation in this research project, or agreeing to participate, may raise any questions or issues with the researchers at any time. In addition, any person not satisfied with the response of researchers may raise ethics issues or concerns, and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the Human Ethics office at UWA on (08) 6488 4703 or by emailing to humanethics@uwa.edu.au. All research participants are entitled to retain a copy of any Participant Information Form and/or Participant Consent Form relating to this research project.