

Brief Information Sheet

Introduction to the study

The title of this research study is;

Sitting in the client's chair – Exploring how mandatory reporting of childhood abuse during therapy influences the client's experience of psychotherapy.

Sharon Cunningham, a student on the Doctorate in Psychotherapy programme, is carrying out the study under the supervision of Dr Aisling McMahon and Dr Denise Proudfoot, both at DCU School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health.

Purpose and Rationale of the study

This study aims to uncover how the mandatory reporting of childhood abuse during therapy influences the client's experience of psychotherapy.

Previous research suggests that mandatory reporting can positively and negatively impact the therapy, therapeutic relationship, and outcome of therapy. However, most of these previous studies have focused on the perspectives of the therapists. This study explores the experience from the psychotherapy client's perspective, giving the client's experience a voice.

What does participation involve?

You are invited to take part in a research interview where you will have the opportunity to discuss your experience of mandatory reporting of child abuse during psychotherapy.

The interview will last about an hour to an hour and a half, followed by a short debriefing. The interview will occur either face-to-face at a mutually convenient location or virtually via Zoom. The interview will be audio or video recorded.

You are asked not to name any third parties during the research process. You will not be asked to talk about your experience of childhood abuse.

Before the interview, you will be asked to read and sign a consent form confirming your willingness to partake in the study.

What are the potential benefits and risks in taking part in the study?

No direct benefits are anticipated; however, participation in the study will allow you to reflect on your experience of mandatory reporting of child abuse during psychotherapy. Also, sharing your experiences may inform future psychotherapy practice and give psychotherapists more understanding of the client's experience.

Although you will not be asked directly about your childhood abuse experiences, there is a potential risk that you may become distressed during the interview when discussing your experiences of the mandatory reporting of your abuse and how this impacted your experience of psychotherapy. In this event, the interview can be paused, stopped, and you can withdraw from the study. If you need further support, the researcher will direct and assist you in accessing the relevant support.

How is my privacy protected?

Research data and materials will only be accessible to those working on the research team. All personal details and identifying information will be removed to protect your privacy. The transcripts will be anonymised and securely stored. While every effort will be made to protect your anonymity, due to the small number of participants and direct quotations from the interviews used in the write-up of the study's findings, anonymity cannot be 100% guaranteed.

Do I have a right to withdraw from the study?

The choice to participate or not in the study is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study up to the point of data analysis, and this will be three weeks from the interview.

If you have any queries regarding the study:

You can contact Sharon Cunningham on 086 455 1186 or via email on sharon.cunningham35@mail.dcu.ie.

Furthermore, it is important to note that if you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact: The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-700 8000, Email rec@dcu.ie.