

## PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

### Investigating the impact of volunteering on the development of resilience in student paramedics: A mixed methods inquiry

#### Invitation

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating the impact of volunteering on the development of resilience in student paramedics.

The study is being conducted by Clare Sutton from the School of Biomedical Science, Dr Patricia Logan from the Faculty of Science and Professor Russell Roberts of the Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Studies at Charles Sturt University.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

Thank you for your interest in this research project. This information is provided so that you can make an informed decision about participating in this study.

#### Researchers

**Chief Investigator:** Clare Sutton, PhD Candidate, School of Biomedical Science, Charles Sturt, Bathurst, [csutton@csu.edu.au](mailto:csutton@csu.edu.au), 02 6338 4022

#### Supervisors:

Dr. Patricia Logan, PhD, SFHEA, Faculty of Science, Charles Sturt, Bathurst, [plogan@csu.edu.au](mailto:plogan@csu.edu.au)

Professor Russell Roberts, PhD, Faculty of Business, Justice & Behavioural Sciences, Charles Sturt, Orange, [rroberts@csu.edu.au](mailto:rroberts@csu.edu.au)

**Associate researchers** - will assist with conducting the interviews

Dr Donna Bridges, PhD, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Charles Sturt, Bathurst

Dr Jenni Grieg, PhD, Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Science, Charles Sturt, Bathurst

#### What is the purpose of this study?

We are a team of researchers from Charles Sturt University interested in investigating the impact of volunteering on the development of resilience in student paramedics. Resilience has been identified as a protective factor that impacts on how effectively people are able to employ coping strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of exposure to traumatic events or to organisational stressors.

Research is needed on how to develop resilience in paramedics and paramedic students and how to ensure their levels of resilience are maintained throughout their career. Enhancing resilience through acquiring a better understanding of what factors influence its' development may foster a better sense of wellbeing amongst students and assist in their transition into the work environment. Findings will be used to inform curriculum development with an overarching goal to promote career longevity for the next generation of paramedics through the maintenance of good mental health.



### **Why have I been invited to participate in this study?**

All students who have fully completed the first year, full-time study equivalent of an Australian undergraduate paramedic degree course are invited to participate if they have engaged in volunteering activities within the last five years.

Volunteering is defined as 'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain' (Volunteering Australia, 2015).

### **What does this study involve?**

There are two components to this research. Research participants are asked to:

- Complete an online survey (duration approx. 20 - 30 minutes)
- Participate in an interview (duration one hour maximum)

If you agree to participate in the online survey, you would be asked to answer questions concerning your personal experiences with coping and resilience, with emphasis on things like social support, approaches to stress, and wellbeing. You may then be invited to undertake an interview to explore these concepts in further depth and to look at the potential impact of volunteering on the issues discussed. Given the current recommendations around social distancing, interviews will take place via telephone or online platforms. Should these restrictions be lifted, there will be an option for face to face interviews if the participant and interview team are in agreement. The interviews will take up to 60 minutes and will be conducted at a mutually agreed time. The interviews will be audio recorded, and hardcopy notes will be taken throughout to assist in the data analysis stages.

The chief researcher will not interview any participants enrolled at her institution to minimise concerns over power relations. When the chief researcher is unable to be part of the interview team, the two associate researchers will undertake the interview on her behalf to ensure consistency.

If you have offered to participate in an interview but are not selected, you will be contacted by a member of the research team to confirm you are not required to attend an interview.

### **Are there risks and benefits to me in taking part in this study?**

The risks of taking part in the study are associated with thinking about traumatic events that you may have witnessed while volunteering or during your life in general and thinking about how the experience has made you feel. While this is not the intention of the research, because we are focusing on resilience (the ability to engage in adaptive behaviours or successful coping in the face of stress or adversity), this may occur. In the event that you experience any negative or distressing feelings or emotions support is available through your university Counselling service or through other support services such as Beyond Blue. A package of support details will be provided in the debrief statement at the end of the survey and following the interview.

All the questionnaires used in this research project come from standardized tests, however they are not in themselves diagnostic of any specific mental health conditions. Before submitting your survey responses you may wish to save and / or print a copy for your own records. Further guidance regarding scoring of some surveys is provided in the debrief statement.

The research team will provide feedback on the survey scores in those instances where we are able to match the responses to specific participants (eg, those who provided contact information) should their scores indicate further assessment or support may be advisable. If you have not received an



email from the research team within 2 weeks of submission please assume your scores did not indicate further assessment was advisable.

The benefits of taking part is that this research will contribute to the evolving knowledge base of strategies to enhance personal resilience with a particular focus on whether volunteering provides an effective medium for developing resilience. Resilience has been identified as a protective factor that impacts on how effectively people are able to employ coping strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of exposure to traumatic events or to organisational stressors.

By exploring the development of resilience, this research aims to ensure paramedic graduates are mentally prepared to cope with the challenges associated with their chosen career.

#### **How is this study being paid for?**

There is no funding being provided from external organisations towards this study.

#### **Will taking part in this study (or travelling to) cost me anything, and will I be paid?**

It will not cost you anything to take part in this study other than the time to complete the online surveys and the time taken to participate in the interview. Video and phone interviews are not expected to incur any costs. If the interview can occur face to face, you may be asked to travel a short distance to a mutually-agreed location. This is at your convenience and travel will not be reimbursed.

No payment will be made to participants.

#### **What if I don't want to take part in this study?**

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. You are under no obligation to participate in the research project. You may also decline to answer any particular questions during the survey and / or the interview phase of the research.

#### **What if I participate and want to withdraw later?**

You may withdraw before, during or after the interview has taken place. To withdraw while undertaking the survey component, simply quit without completing by closing the browser window. Any incomplete data sets will be removed from the results. To withdraw following the interview component, please notify the research team within one month of the interview and your data will be withdrawn and destroyed. Once data analysis has begun, it will not be possible to withdraw as your data will have been deidentified. Data analysis will not begin until one month after data collection to allow a cooling off period should you wish to withdraw.

#### **How will my confidentiality be protected?**

The survey is undertaken in software called Survey Monkey. Data entered into the survey is protected under Survey Monkey's privacy policy and security statement. All data retrieved from the surveys will be stored on password protected computers in locked offices. Data collected through the online survey is anonymous. If you are willing to participate in an interview you will be asked to provide your contact details at the end of the survey. By providing your contact details, your survey responses will no longer be anonymous as the research team will be able to identify your survey. Once the interview component has been completed, survey data will be matched with interview

data and these matched data sets will be deidentified. All data obtained from the interviews will be deidentified through the use of pseudonyms.

Contact information for those participants who agreed to be interviewed will be stored in a separate place to their survey responses.

Survey data for participants who provided contact details but were not invited for interview will be deidentified.

The data will be kept indefinitely in order to enable comparisons in to the future and further research looking at strategies for building paramedic resilience in the Australian workforce.

#### **What will happen to the information that I give to you?**

A variety of approaches will be utilised to share the findings arising from the data provided. These may include internal presentations to other academics at Charles Sturt, peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations and presentation of findings to educational institutions or special interest groups representing the paramedic profession to inform curriculum development. The work will also form a component in Clare Sutton's PhD dissertation.

#### **What should I do if I want to discuss this study further before I decide?**

If you have any questions about this project, at any time, you can contact: Clare Sutton, Chief Investigator, [csutton@csu.edu.au](mailto:csutton@csu.edu.au) or Patricia Logan, Research Supervisor, [plogan@csu.edu.au](mailto:plogan@csu.edu.au)

#### **Who should I contact if I have concerns about the conduct of this study?**

Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project [Protocol number: H20240]. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Ethics and Compliance Unit via the following contact details:

*The Governance Officer  
Human Research Ethics Committee  
Ethics and Compliance Unit  
Locked Bag 588  
Wagga Wagga NSW 2678  
Tel: (02) 6933 4213  
Email: [ethics@csu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@csu.edu.au)*

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

#### **Conclusion**

This participant information sheet should be printed and retained so you have a reminder of what is involved in the research. It also has the contact details of the researchers and the Research Committee.

**Please follow the link provided to access the survey:**

[https://www.research.net/r/Paramedic\\_Student\\_Resilience](https://www.research.net/r/Paramedic_Student_Resilience)

***Thank you for helping with this research project.***