
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM *[Survey]*

Title: Social Media Use and Anxiety

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Description of the study

Anxiety is a leading mental health concern, and evidence increasingly links its development and maintenance to social media use. Anxiety symptoms are mainly caused by fear of missing out (FOMO), fear of judgment, compulsive scrolling, and distress after online interactions. This project seeks to co-design and validate a culturally inclusive AI chatbot prototype that detects and mitigates anxiety based on smartphone use. The project will assess the feasibility and acceptability of using passive smartphone data to identify anxiety tied explicitly to social media use. The project team will work with a mental health Lived Experience Co-design Group to inform the content and design of a national survey seeking the perspectives of people with lived experience of anxiety associated with social media use. These insights will guide chatbot logic, interface preferences, and ethical safeguards. Survey results will inform a larger project to test a scalable AI-based mental health solution to anxiety associated with social media use, including AI training, real-world testing, and clinical integration.

Purpose of the study

This study aims to assess the feasibility and acceptability of using real-time social media and sleep data to identify behavioural patterns associated with anxiety symptoms, to improve diagnostic accuracy and early detection of anxiety-related conditions.

Benefits of the study

Sharing your experiences will help to build understanding of anxiety and social media use. This research will generate foundational knowledge on how social media use affects individuals with anxiety disorders, a topic of growing clinical and public health relevance. Whilst you may not receive any direct benefit from your involvement in this study, the feedback you provide will help to generate new knowledge that may lead to the development of better approaches to anxiety and social media use.

Participant involvement and potential risks

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous online survey, which will take about 30 minutes. If you wish or need to, you may seek assistance from a trusted family member, friend or peer to help you access or complete the survey. We anticipate low risks from your involvement in this study, though some people may become anxious recalling negative experiences associated with their social media use. If you are concerned that you may experience any anxiety by completing the survey, you

may wish to discuss this information sheet, the project, of the survey questions with a support person you trust prior to making a decision. If you experience feelings of anxiety or distress as a result of participation in this study, please seek support from those who you usually feel comfortable to reach out to. This may be a trusted family member, friend, GP, or your mental health support service. Alternatively, you may wish to contact the following organisations for support:

- LifeLine **13 11 14** or <http://www.lifelineadelaide.org/?gclid=CNKV1ce1tNMCFYwHKgodas8FdA>
- Beyond Blue Support Service on **1300 22 4636** or <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>
- The Carer Gateway Counselling Service **1800 422 737** or www.carergateway.gov.au
- 13 Yarn for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person/people

Withdrawal Rights

Participation in any research project is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. You may elect to not answer any survey question or just close the internet browser and leave the online survey at any time freely and without prejudice or obligation. Your continued connection to Lived Experience Australia (LEA) is not contingent on participating in this research. Submission of the anonymous survey will indicate your understanding of the study and consent to be involved. Once you have provided your survey responses, it will not be possible to withdraw your survey contributions due to the inability to identify them from the overall responses.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Only the researchers listed on this form have access to the information you provide. They all have current certificates for working with vulnerable groups and will take all possible steps to ensure privacy and confidentiality are adhered to at all times. Once the survey closes, the Lived Experience Co-design Group who helped us to develop the survey questions will be invited to help us finalise themes arising from the survey. In recognition of your participation, you can choose to enter a random draw for one of two \$50 gift vouchers, sent via your email address or phone number (electronic voucher) or postal address (hardcopy voucher). You can include your preferred contact details at the end of the survey via a link to a separate confidential online area so that your survey responses and contact details are stored separately. We will not be able to link it back to your survey answers. We anticipate the study results will be published and presented at a conference. In any publication or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified.

Data Storage

Information collected will be stored securely on a password protected computer and Flinders University and QUT server throughout the study. Any identifiable data will be de-identified for data storage purposes unless indicated otherwise. All data will be securely transferred to and stored at Flinders University and QUT for five years after publication of results. Following the required data storage period, all data will be securely destroyed according to university protocols. Raw survey data will be stored securely within Lived Experience Australia's password-protected SurveyMonkey site, where it will be retained for 5 years, then deleted.

How will I receive feedback?

On project completion, a short summary of the outcomes will be provided through Lived Experience Australia's monthly e-news, and from the Lived Experience Australia website:

<https://www.livedexperienceaustralia.com.au/research>

Ethics Committee Approval

The project has been approved by Flinders University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC No: 8983).

Queries and Concerns

If you want any further information concerning this project you can telephone the principal researcher, Professor Sharon Lawn on 0459 098 772. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Flinders University's Research Ethics and Compliance Office team either via telephone (08) 8201 2543 or by emailing the Office via human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. By completing/submitting this survey, you are consenting to participate in this study and to the conditions outlined in the Participant Information Form.