

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Randomised controlled trial of a digital programme for procrastination in UK university students

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This information sheet forms part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. Please read this information sheet carefully and ask one of the researchers named above if you are not clear about any details of the project.

1. What is the purpose of the project:

Procrastination is the act of postponing tasks and assignments that need to be performed. Internet-based cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) could represent a simple, scalable way to support people with procrastination. Previous studies have found internet CBT to reduce procrastination in Swedish university students. However, we do not know if this would apply to a younger group of UK university students. The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of a digital support programme for procrastination on mental and physical health in young people aged 16-24.

2. Why have I been selected to take part? [or Who can be a participant?]

You have been selected because you are a student between the age of 16-24 who struggles with procrastination and is willing to engage with the necessary technological applications that will be used during the study.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you to decide if you would like to participate. Before you decide to take part we will describe the project and go through this information sheet with you. If you agree to take part, we will then ask you to sign a consent form. However, if at any time you decide you no longer wish to take part in this project you are free to withdraw, without giving a reason.

4. What will I be asked to do?

We will first ask you to complete a brief measure to assess your level of procrastination. Depending on your score, you will be included in the study and asked to provide some information about yourself via an online survey. If your score

means you are not eligible, you will not have to do anything further and your data will not be kept. The survey should take around 15-minutes to complete. After this, you will be randomly assigned to either receive the digital procrastination programme or be put on a waiting list where you will receive access to the programme after 8-weeks. You will be informed of your allocation upon completion of the first survey.

If randomised to the intervention group, you will receive a link with access to a weekly digital procrastination programme. You will receive an autogenerated username, a strong personal password, and a six-letter code via SMS. Each week, you will receive access to a new module with around 15 pages. Each module provides you with information about the key factors that maintain procrastination, along with some weekly exercises to complete. Each module should take around 1 hour 45 minutes per week (15 minutes per day) to complete. However, this may vary. You will also receive email reminders to access the modules. You will not receive any human guidance. However, you can contact the research team via email to receive technical support if needed.

If you are randomised to the waitlist group, you will not receive the digital intervention until after 8 weeks.

Throughout the study, you will be asked to complete an online survey about your physical and mental health at the beginning of the study, after 4 weeks and after 8 weeks. Please complete these surveys, regardless of which group you are randomised to.

5. What are the exclusion criteria? (are there reasons why I should not take part)?

You are not eligible for this study if you:

- are not between the ages of 16-24 and do not struggle with procrastination.
- receiving psychological treatment (e.g., CBT)
- have started a new course or changed in dose of antidepressant medication in the last two months

6. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no specific direct benefits to taking part in this study. However, we hope that the intervention may produce positive effects on your psychological health and well-being. The study could help you deal with your issues around procrastination. You will be provided with the opportunity to contribute to an expanding body of literature.

7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

One possible risk of taking part in the study is potential psychological distress. You are completely free to choose not to answer any questions on the survey should you wish not to. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time should you wish to. We have also provided links to a variety of relevant resources below:

- [Wellbeing Service](#) - Wellbeing support is available every day (including weekends and public holidays) over the holiday period. You can call them at 01225 383838 or email wellbeingsservice@bath.ac.uk
- [Be Well - Talk Now](#) service - Students can also access our free phone/text support service line, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- You can also find useful information on the [Student Support](#) web pages.
- Health advice is available online from the NHS 111 Service
- Confidential emotional phone support is available 24/7 from Samaritans: 116 123

8. Will my participation involve any discomfort or embarrassment?

There is no expectation of any discomfort or embarrassment if you take part in the project. If however you do feel uncomfortable at any time, you are free to choose not to answer any questions on the surveys or withdraw from the study.

9. Who will have access to the information that I provide?

Only the researcher and supervisors will have access to the information provided. All records are confidential and will be treated as such.

10. What will happen to the data collected and results of the project?

All data collected during the project including personal, identifiable data will be treated as confidential and kept in a locked cabinet in a locked room or on a password-protected file on the University of Bath's secure server. This storage of data will be done in following current UK data protection legislation. Recorded data (anonymised) data will be kept for at least 10 years.. Your name or other identifying information will not be disclosed in any presentation or publication of the research.

After the project has finished, we will also provide participants with a summary of the project results if they would like that. This summary will not include any identifiable information and will show the overall findings of the project.

Once this project is completed, other researchers at the University of Bath may conduct related research projects which would benefit from the use of the data that you have provided. Further use of your data will only occur with your consent and the University of Bath's approval where data will continue to be stored in accordance with current UK data protection legislation. So again, your name or other identifying information will not be disclosed in any presentation or publication of the research.

11. Who has reviewed the project?

This project has been given a favourable opinion by the University of Bath, Research Ethics Approval Committee for Health (REACH) [reference: 23 023].

12. How can I withdraw from the project?

If you wish to stop participating before completing all parts of the project you can inform one of the above-identified researchers in person or by email or telephone. You can withdraw from the project at any time without providing a reason for doing so and without any repercussions.

If for any reason you wish to withdraw your data, please contact an identified researcher. You will have a 2-week window after each data collection timepoint to withdraw your data. After this time, it may not be possible to withdraw your data as some results may have been published or anonymized. Your individual results will not be identifiable in any way in any presentation or publication.

13. University of Bath privacy notice

The University of Bath privacy notice can be found here:

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/university-of-bath-privacy-notice-for-research-participants/>.

14. What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of the project you should ask to speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer any questions. If they are unable to resolve your concern or you wish to make a complaint regarding the project, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Approval Committee for Health:

Professor James Betts

Email: health-ethics@bath.ac.uk.

15. If I require further information who should I contact and how?

Thank you for expressing an interest in participating in this project. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you would like some more information.

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