

## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHHET / PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT**

Research Title: An exploration of the potential contribution that embedding counselling skills and practice could bring to leadership development: A Thematic Analysis.

Name of the University: Dublin City University (DCU)

Department: School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health

Programme: MSc Psychotherapy

Researcher: Yvonne McWey at email at [yvonne.mcwey2@mail.dcu.ie](mailto:yvonne.mcwey2@mail.dcu.ie) or Mob: 085 1744985

Research supervisor: Dr Ray O'Neill, at email - [rayb.oneill@dcu.ie](mailto:rayb.oneill@dcu.ie) or Tel: 01-700 7750.

### **Purpose and rationale of study**

You are invited to participate in a study on the potential contribution that embedding counselling skills and practice could bring to leadership training and development. A significant amount of counselling that people receive can often take place in situated or natural settings e.g., in the workplace. Embedded counselling is the term used to describe the use of counselling skills in occupations where counselling is not their main function. This typically would be associated with occupations like teachers, nurses, pastoral care, police where part of their role is in providing help to people. There is a scarcity of research on embedded counselling skills and leader's role in employee wellbeing - yet c-suite/senior business leaders have an important role in supporting employee's wellbeing.

This study is being undertaken in fulfilment of an MSc Psychotherapy; and intends to explore the views, and experiences of those who are either responsible for employee wellbeing and decision making in leadership training and development, and who may or may not have had experience or exposure to embedded counselling skills. The study will also include those who are involved in the delivery of embedded counselling skills training to leaders in the corporate sector and, practicing psychotherapists who may or may not be involved in providing psychotherapeutic support to leaders responsible for employee wellbeing. Your input will be invaluable on providing insight on the extent and adequacy of embedded counselling skills in current leadership training and development programmes.

Evidence shows that when informal psychological help is effectively provided in response to people's emotional concerns or wellbeing issues, there is generally an associated positive reaction. This study is aimed at exploring the role that embedded counselling skills could bring to help improve how leaders handle such situations specifically in listening and effectively responding to people who are having emotional difficulties and require some help. In undertaking this research, it is also intended that it will provide insight on the extent and adequacy of embedded counselling skills in a sample of current leadership development programmes.

### **What does participation involve?**

Your participation will involve a one-hour face-to-face interview in a secure office at your place of work or at DCU, whichever is most convenient; or via a zoom interview, followed by a short debriefing. Face to face interviews will be recorded on a digital audio device and for interviews conducted via zoom (will be recorded via audio cloud recording on DCU zoom facilities). Ahead of the interview, you will be required to read and sign a consent form confirming that you are willing to participate in the study. Those participating via zoom, will be able email the signed consent form to the researcher while online and before the interview begins. The consent forms will be scanned and saved on the secure DCU server and a hard signed copy will also be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in Dr Ray O'Neill, the research supervisor's locked office in the Department of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health on the DCU Campus. The interview will contain a range of questions regarding your views and experiences of embedded counselling skills as part of leadership training and development.

### **How is your privacy protected?**

All identifying information will be removed by the researcher and transcripts will be pseudo-anonymised and stored securely. Every effort will be made to protect your anonymity, however, due to the small number of interviews and the use of direct quotation (when writing up the study), anonymity cannot be guaranteed, there is a very slight possibility that you may be identified.

This study will be conducted in compliance with the general data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and if you have any concerns regarding your data in this study has been handled, you can contact : DCU Data Protection Officer, Mr Martin Ward – ([data.protection@dcu.ie](mailto:data.protection@dcu.ie) Tel: 01-7005118/01 / 01-700 8257) who will handle any data protection concerns arising from this research. You also have a right to report a complaint concerning the use of personal data to the Irish Data Protection Commission: Data Protection Commissioner.

### **Potential benefits/risks**

It is not anticipated that there will be any direct individual benefits, however, there is the opportunity for you to reflect on your own experiences / exposure to training in or use of embedded counselling to effectively support employee wellbeing. There may be a very slight risk that you could become distressed when reflecting on these experiences. If this happens, you will be encouraged to discuss this with the researcher during debrief face-to-face and online, and if further support is needed, the researcher will direct you to the appropriate resources.

### **Limits of confidentiality**

Confidentiality cannot be maintained in the event of a disclosure of information which involves a risk to you, another person, or a child protection issue (Children First guidelines will be adhered to), or if

professional malpractice is disclosed. If any of these issues should arise, the researcher and her supervisor will discuss its management with you.

### **What type of personal data will be collected about me?**

The following personal data will be collected for the purposes of describing the demographics of participants in study publications: *Do you have had any relevant or related training to counselling skills e.g., people leadership, coaching, communication skills training.*

### **Do I have the right to withdraw from this study?**

The choice to participate in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequence. Should you have any concerns relating to the study and wish to withdraw from the study, you can contact the researcher directly - Yvonne McWey by email at [yvonne.mcwey2@mail.dcu.ie](mailto:yvonne.mcwey2@mail.dcu.ie) or Mobile: 085 1744985; alternatively the research supervisor: Dr Ray O'Neill, at [rayb.oneill@dcu.ie](mailto:rayb.oneill@dcu.ie) or Tel: 01-700 7750.

### **How will my data be used and disposed of?**

Reflexive Thematic Analysis is the research methodology that will be used to analyse the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews to address the research question.

DCU is the data controller for this study, with the researcher ensuring adherence to data protection and security protocols throughout the overall study. All the project data will be hosted and stored on the secure DCU network which requires duo-authentication security measures to access. Within 24hrs of the interview, the audio recording of the interview will be safely uploaded to the secure DCU server on the cloud 'Google' drive and will be transcribed from the audio recording by the researcher (within one week). The data will be cleaned to remove any identifying information, which will then be replaced with codes/pseudonyms. Once transcribed, the audio recording will be securely deleted.

Any hard copy material (which will be kept to a minimum and will include the original signed consent form) will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in Dr Ray O'Neill, the research supervisor's locked office in the Department of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health on the DCU Campus. All the data collected will be stored until August 2025 following completion of and marking of the Masters' programme, and to allow for access to project data in the event of the publication of study findings (As it is anticipated that the findings will be submitted to an international psychotherapy / occupational psychology & counselling journal(s) for publication). It is also intended that the completed research will be available at the DCU library.

After this time, the researcher will securely dispose of all digital records (from the DCU Server) and hard-copy materials will be securely disposed of using a secure disposal service. The research supervisor will

also provide a check that the data is destroyed (in August 2025).

**How can I find out what happens to the Thesis? / How can I access the findings?**

All participants will be offered a one-page synopsis of the study findings. You will have the opportunity to let the researcher know if you wish to receive this (and any subsequent published journal articles) at the end of the interview process. This synopsis will be based on the final graded Thesis. The completed Thesis will be available at the DCU library (subject to sufficient results being obtained). All the original project data pertaining to the Thesis will be securely destroyed in August 2025.

**Who can I contact if I have any further queries?**

If you have any questions regarding the research, please contact the researcher: Yvonne McWey by email at [yvonne.mcwey2@mail.dcu.ie](mailto:yvonne.mcwey2@mail.dcu.ie) or Mobile: 085 1744985; alternatively the research supervisor: Dr Ray O'Neill, at [rayb.oneill@dcu.ie](mailto:rayb.oneill@dcu.ie) or Tel: 01-700 7750.

If participants have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact: The Chairperson, Ethics Review Committee, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel. 01-7008543, [mark.philbin@dcu.ie](mailto:mark.philbin@dcu.ie).