

# Plain Language Statement

## Research study title

**The experiences of second level teachers who have completed counselling skills training and are embedding counselling skills into their teaching roles.**

## Who is conducting this research?

Anna Fewer-Hamilton is a Chartered Counselling Psychologist (PSI) and a lecturer at Atlantic Technological University, Sligo. She is conducting this research as a Doctoral candidate on the Doctorate in Psychotherapy programme with the School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health at Dublin City University. Anna is the Lead Researcher throughout this project alongside her supervisors Dr. Ray O'Neill, Assistant Professor in Psychotherapy, and Dr. Siobhán Russell, Assistant Professor in Mental Health Nursing, both with Dublin City University. This project has been approved by the DCU Research Ethics Committee.

## What is this research study about?

It is about the experiences of people who use counselling skills informally within their primary role, specifically the experiences of second level teachers with counselling skills training and who are teaching in the Republic of Ireland.

Although research has shown that teachers are completing counselling skills training and are using counselling skills in their work, less is known about what this is like for teachers and how this impacts their role.

This study aims to discover what this experience is like for second level teachers by asking them to share their accounts of using counselling skills as a teacher, after they have completed counselling skills training. It is hoped that this research will shed some light on an important but under researched field of practice with a view to advancing and developing counselling skills training and practice into the future.

## Why are you being invited to participate?

You are being invited to participate as you may have the relevant background, training, and experience in second level teaching and counselling skills to inform this research. Such insight, know-how, and familiarity with the subject matter is central to this research.

## Who can participate in this research?

The research project is about second level teachers who have completed counselling skills training and are embedding counselling skills into their teaching roles. Any second level teacher who wishes to participate and who meets the criteria for inclusion can volunteer to take part. About 6 to 8 participants are needed so once this number of volunteers is reached recruitment will end. You can find out more about the criteria by contacting the Lead Researcher (Anna Fewer-Hamilton) at her details below.

## How do I volunteer to participate?

If you're interested in participating, please let the Lead Researcher (Anna Fewer-Hamilton) know at her details below. Anna will fill you in on all the details and will answer any questions you may have.

### What will participation in this research study involve?

You will be invited to take part in an in-depth interview with the Lead Researcher (Anna Fewer-Hamilton) about your experiences of using counselling skills in your teaching role. The interview will be audio recorded.

Before this goes ahead, you will be asked to read this information sheet carefully and to give your consent to taking part in the research. You will have the chance to ask as many questions as you want about the research. You will be asked to sign the Informed Consent Form prior to the interview.

The interview will last about an hour and will take place at a time and location convenient to you. If you prefer, the interview can take place online using Zoom.

You can contact the Lead Researcher (Anna Fewer-Hamilton) up to 14 days afterwards if you have any follow up questions or comments, and you will be asked to consent to the Lead Researcher (Anna Fewer-Hamilton) contacting you within 14 days also, if she needs to clarify any details with you.

### Is participation voluntary and can I opt out at any stage?

Participation is entirely voluntary, and you can pause the interview, end the interview, or withdraw from the research study at any stage, even after the interview has taken place, up to the point of publication and dissemination of the outcome of the research or within 2 years of the study when all stored data will be destroyed, whichever is first. There is no need to explain should you wish to withdraw from the research study. If you decide to withdraw from the study your information will be securely destroyed in accordance with the Privacy Notice below.

### Information about the confidentiality of information provided by participants.

Your information will be handled with exceptional care and in line with GDPR. Every effort will be made to keep your information confidential. Confidentiality of information can only be protected within the limitations of the law - i.e., it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions.

Small, anonymised extracts from participant interviews that have had identifying details removed and that use pseudonyms may be used to illustrate the findings of the research project when it is written up and disseminated. While great caution will be applied when disseminating the findings of the research study, there remains a small possibility that participants might be identifiable because of the small sample size.

You are reminded of the importance of respecting the confidentiality of others e.g., students, when speaking about your work during your interview. In the unlikely event that potentially unethical professional practice or child protection concerns come to light during the research project the Lead Researcher (Anna Fewer-Hamilton) will consult with her research supervisors, her professional body, the Psychological Society of Ireland, and will follow Children First (2015) Guidance, as appropriate.

### What will happen to the information that I provide?

The information that you give to the Lead Researcher (Anna Fewer-Hamilton) and the recording of your interview will be carefully and securely stored at all times. Digital information will be encrypted and password protected. Paper records will be kept in locked files and only the Lead Researcher (Anna Fewer-Hamilton) will have access to them. Written transcripts of participant interviews will be studied carefully to help the researchers to learn about the experiences of teachers using counselling skills. Small, anonymised extracts from participant

interviews that have had identifying details removed and that use pseudonyms may be used to illustrate the findings of the research project when it is written up and disseminated.

The overall findings of this research project will be written up as a doctoral thesis which will be stored in the Dublin City University library online research repository Doras. The research findings and information provided may be used in publications in professional journals, and disseminated at professional conferences and meetings, and to counselling and psychology students through lecturing activities. A summary of the research results will be shared with participants on request once the study is complete.

### When will the information that I provide be destroyed?

After the completion of the research study, all data will be securely stored for a period of two years, and then it will be destroyed by the Lead Researcher (Anna Fewer-Hamilton). Digital records will be irrevocably erased, and paper records will be confidentially shredded.

### Are there any risks from participating in this research study?

There are minimal risks from participating in this research study. You will be invited to discuss your professional activities and will not be asked about personal or sensitive issues. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you can pause the interview, end the interview, or withdraw from the research study at any stage, even after the interview has taken place, up to the point of publication and dissemination of the outcome of the research or within 2 years of the study when all stored data will be destroyed, whichever is first. Extensive care will be taken to protect your privacy. There is a small possibility that participants might be identifiable in disseminated findings because of the small sample size but robust procedures are in place to safeguard your identity.

Should the need arise, you can avail of a free debriefing interview with a professional psychotherapist in the Dublin City University Healthy Living Centre following your interview. This can be arranged in confidence by contacting the Dublin City University Healthy Living Centre on 01 7007171 or by email [hlc@dcu.ie](mailto:hlc@dcu.ie).

### Are there any benefits (direct or indirect) from participating in this research study?

Although direct benefits from taking part are not expected, there may be some indirect benefits. You will have the chance to give voice to what it is like to use counselling skills as a second level teacher. Discussing experiences that may not have been articulated before during in-depth interviews may have a therapeutic effect, even though it they're not therapy sessions.

Additionally, your contribution to this research study may help to grow the existing body of knowledge about counselling skills.

### Privacy notice

The following information advises you about the use of your personal data in this research project.

- The Data Controller responsible for the security of all personal data in this study is Dublin City University.
- The Data Processors for this study are the researchers, Anna Fewer-Hamilton, Dr. Ray O'Neill, and Dr. Siobhán Russell, of the School of Nursing, Psychotherapy, and Community Health, Dublin City University. A Data Processor may hold or process personal data but does not exercise responsibility for or control over the personal data.

- The Dublin City University Data Protection Officer is Mr. Martin Ward ([data.protection@dcu.ie](mailto:data.protection@dcu.ie) Ph.: 7005118 / 7008257)
- Data is processed in this study for the purpose of gathering and analysing raw data for a research project.
- Personal data processed in this study will include names, contact information, sociodemographic information, and descriptions of professional activity.
- A 2-year data retention period will apply following completion of the study during which time data may be used for the purposes of publication.
- Participants have the right to lodge a complaint with the [Irish Data Protection Commission](#).
- Participants have the right to access their own personal data and can request a copy of their data by contacting Anna Fewer-Hamilton [anna.fewerhamilton2@mail.dcu.ie](mailto:anna.fewerhamilton2@mail.dcu.ie) or alternatively by contacting the Dublin City University Data Protection Unit [data.protection@dcu.ie](mailto:data.protection@dcu.ie) .
- Participants have the right to withdraw and can do so by contacting Anna Fewer-Hamilton [anna.fewerhamilton2@mail.dcu.ie](mailto:anna.fewerhamilton2@mail.dcu.ie). Once a participant withdraws, their personal data will be securely destroyed.
- Anonymised data may be used in publication and dissemination of the findings of this research project.

#### Any other information

Participants are very welcome to contact the Lead Researcher (Anna Fewer-Hamilton) should they wish to receive a summary of the results of this study when it is complete.

#### Contact details.

Anna Fewer-Hamilton, Email: [anna.fewerhamilton2@mail.dcu.ie](mailto:anna.fewerhamilton2@mail.dcu.ie) Tel: 087 24 66 873

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*If participants have 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 01-7008000, e-mail [rec@dcu.ie](mailto:rec@dcu.ie)*