



University of Brighton

Participation Information Sheet

An exploration of the interplay between cancer and humanistic/existential-phenomenological counselling/psychotherapy.

Introduction and what is the purpose of the study/project?

My name is Dr Charlotte Rustin and I am a Psychotherapy MSc student at the University of Brighton. I am conducting this research for my masters' dissertation.

My interest in this research stems from my own diagnosis and treatment for Stage 2 breast cancer whilst doing the Humanistic Counselling and Psychotherapy PGDip. I felt that how I was experiencing the process of diagnosis, treatment and recovery felt intrinsically linked to, shaped and supported by my learning associated with the existential-phenomenological paradigm. Whilst there is research into the impact of cancer on individuals, research exploring the nature of counsellor's/psychotherapist's experience of cancer is limited. This study therefore aims to explore how a pre-existing understanding of existential-phenomenological constructs may interact with a counsellor/psychotherapist's own experience of cancer.

If you are a counsellor/psychotherapist grounded in the existential-phenomenological construct with personal experience of cancer, I would like to invite you to participate in this research study. Before you decide, I would like you to understand why the research is being conducted and what your participation in it would involve. Please contact me if anything isn't clear or you have any questions regarding this research that aren't covered.

Why have I been invited to participate?

The study will involve 4-5 counsellors/psychotherapists who have both a grounding in existential-phenomenology and lived experience of cancer with at least 1 year since diagnosis. All participants will be members of BACP, UKCP or similar, and have either regular clinical supervision, personal therapy or both. Participation is entirely voluntary. There is no obligation whatsoever to participate and deciding not to take part will have no negative consequences.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Participating in the study will involve a 1:1 unstructured interview with me either face to face or online using Teams. An unstructured interview doesn't use a predetermined set of questions so how the interview evolves will depend on what you choose to talk about. The interview would take place at a mutually convenient time in a quiet, private room either at The Wilbury Rooms, Church Road or at University of Brighton, Moulsecoomb, whichever is more convenient for you. The interview would take between 60-90 minutes and would be recorded with a digital voice recorder. The recordings would later be transcribed and pseudonymised. Findings and quotes will be included in the thesis and possibly published in a journal article.

Will I be paid for taking part?

Although I will appreciate your participation, there will be no payments made for participating.

What are the potential disadvantages or risks of taking part?

A potential risk of taking part is that you will be talking about your experience of cancer which may therefore be distressing. As I am a counsellor and trainee psychotherapist with experience of working with people in distress, should you feel distressed during the interview, I would hold the space for you, stay with the process and we could work through the distress together. You would also have the choice of taking a break or ending the interview. I hope that by all participants having clinical supervision or personal therapy, or both, should participants want a space to process anything that they are left with following the interview, it could be taken to supervision or therapy. Macmillan Cancer Support at the Horizon Centre, 2 Bristol Gate, Brighton BN2 5BD also offer a range of therapies and support services for anyone at any point in their cancer experience.

What are the potential benefits of taking part?

A potential benefit of taking part is the opportunity to reflect on and explore your experience of cancer in relation to the existential-phenomenological framework and your practice as a counsellor/psychotherapist. It is possible that this reflective space could be of interest to you and a rewarding experience. Additionally, a richer understanding of the interface between existential-phenomenological constructs and an individual's own experience of cancer could benefit people facing the uncertainty, loss and anxiety associated with cancer and may impact some of the psychosocial outcomes of cancer. Moreover, as cancer is a common disease with 1 in 2 people developing a form of cancer at some point in their lives, insight into how having cancer may affect elements of practice as a counsellor/psychotherapist could be of value to counsellors/psychotherapists either on a cancer pathway or post-treatment.

Will my taking part in the study/project be kept confidential?

After the interviews, the audio recordings will be stored securely on the University of Brighton's OneDrive. Codenames will be used to label the audio recordings. The transcripts will be stored securely on the University of Brighton's OneDrive and in a lockable storage container. The recordings and transcripts will be deleted after 10 years if the research is published or after 3 years if the research is used only for the MSc thesis. Only myself and my supervisor, Helen Carter, will have access to the data.

The names of participants and any names used in the interviews will be pseudonymised. You will be asked to choose your own identifiers. Care would be taken not to use any quotes that contain identifiable features such as places of work, geographical locations or specifics about diagnosis or treatment.

Here is a link to the University's [Research Privacy Notice](#) for further information on data protection (public link address):

<https://unibrightonac.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/public/ERAnx7fZSR9Lv6MRZ1KwpMMBcOSYGp30CAwkTzbbzHLDNQ?e=4gH9GQ>). This is the QR code for the privacy notice:



What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You may withdraw from the study up to one week after the interview without giving a reason. If you withdraw within the week following the interview then the audio recording of the interview would be deleted and would not be included in any way in the study. After a week it would not be possible to withdraw the data from the study.

What will happen to the results of the project?

The results will be written up in an MSc thesis and could potentially be published as an academic paper. It will be possible to provide a one page summary of the research if it is requested. However, an ongoing dialogue with participants will not be possible.

Contact details

For further information about the project, please contact me, Charlotte Rustin, on c.rustin1@uni.brighton.ac.uk

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have a question or in the event of any concern, you can contact Dr Lucy Redhead, l.redhead@brighton.ac.uk who is independent of this study but chaired the ethics committee that reviewed this study.

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed and given a favourable ethical opinion by Cross-School Research Ethics Committee A.