**Online Participant Information Sheet and Consent**

**Study Title**: Yoga, compassion, self-criticism and wellbeing: Exploring mechanisms of change

**Researchers**: Laura Pick, Dr Margo Ononaiye and Dr Alison Bennetts

**ERGO Number:** 61031

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked for your consent online.

**What is the research about?**

This research is being undertaken as part of a doctoral qualification in Clinical Psychology at the University of Southampton. There is growing evidence to support the benefits of yoga as a health intervention and as an adjunct treatment in mental health care. Yoga has been associated with increased levels of mindfulness and self-compassion and improvements in anxiety, depression and self-esteem. However, evidence regarding the mechanisms through which yoga brings about positive effects remains limited. Emerging research has identified that self-compassion may be an important component underlying the benefits of contemplative practices such as yoga, in addition to being a critical protective factor against many mental health difficulties. This study is interested in exploring compassion in people who do and do not practise yoga. For participants who do practise yoga, the second part of the study is interested in the different elements of yoga practise and their relationship to compassion and wellbeing factors.

**Why have I been asked to participate?**

We are inviting all participants who do and do not practise yoga. As long as you are over 18 and have a good comprehension of the English language, you are welcome to take part.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to complete a series of short questionnaires related to the themes of compassion, self-criticism and wellbeing. The first part of the study should take approximately 15 minutes. If you are a yoga practiser, you will be invited to answer an additional questionnaire about your yoga practise, which should take approximately 5 minutes. You will also be invited to answer three free-text questions about your experience of compassion and practising yoga.

**Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

By taking part in this research, you will have the opportunity to contribute to the latest psychological research into mind-body therapies. This research is vital for developing our understanding of the different elements of yoga practise and how it links with psychological theory and wellbeing. As a thank you for participating, there is also a chance of winning one of four £50 Amazon vouchers, by entering a free prize draw at the end of the survey, where you will be asked for your name and email address. If you are a University of Southampton student, you will have the option to receive up to 5 participation points for your time.

**Are there any risks involved?**

We will be asking you about your wellbeing, experiences of compassion and self-criticism. We do not anticipate any serious discomfort, however if any emotional difficulties do arise from the content of the questions, please check out the following resources and websites for information and support:

* The Compassionate Mind Foundation (https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk/)
* Mind – the mental health charity (<https://www.mind.org.uk/>)
* The Samaritans – emergency helpline (<https://www.samaritans.org/>)
* NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Psychological-therapies-%28IAPT%29/LocationSearch/10008>)

If you are a University of Southampton student, you can access support from Enabling Services. Use the following link for contact information: https://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/index.page

**What data will be collected?**

Electronic data (survey responses) will be collected online and will be kept strictly confidential. This will include collection of personal data that is special category data according to Data Protection (this includes information on age, gender identity and ethnicity). This personal data will be handled securely during collection, analysis, storage and transfer using encryption and password protected access.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly anonymous, as the survey is designed to be anonymous at the point you take part. Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to the data for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

To protect your anonymity, if you do choose to enter the prize draw at the end of the study, your first name and email address will be stored securely and separately from your survey responses. Electronic data will be encrypted and stored in a password-protected database only accessible by the research team. All data will be deleted according to the University of Southampton guidelines.

In accordance with University Data Storage guidance, your anonymous data will be deposited in the university data repository along with the resulting thesis. Future research projects may request ethics permissions to run secondary research projects using the data set.

**Do I have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to provide consent by ticking the checkboxes below to show you have agreed to take part.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. If you wish to withdraw at any point during the study, please do so by exiting the survey. Please note that in anonymous surveys **it is not possible for participants to withdraw their data retrospectively**. If at any time during the study you decide to withdraw from the survey, you can do so by simply exiting the survey. Responses will be saved upon the completion of the study.

**What will happen to the results of the research?**

Only members of the research team will be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

To protect your anonymity, if you do choose to enter the prize draw at the end of the study, your first name and email address will be removed and kept securely and separately from your survey responses. Electronic data will be encrypted and stored in a password-protected database only accessible to the research team. All data will be deleted according to the University of Southampton guidelines.

The project will be written up as part of doctoral thesis, disseminated at conferences and submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you. The data may be used for future studies. Anonymised data will be held by the university in a password protected file.

**Where can I get more information?**

If you have any more queries or would like to know more about this study, please do not hesitate to get in touch , details of the research team are provided below.

Chief Investigator: Laura Pick ([lp2n18@soton.ac.uk](mailto:lp2n18@soton.ac.uk))

Research supervisor: Dr Alison Bennetts (a.bennetts@soton.ac.uk)

**What happens if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)).

**Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, ‘Personal data’ means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University’s data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University’s policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason (‘lawful basis’) to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the ‘Data Controller’ for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University’s data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University’s Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@soton.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@soton.ac.uk)).

**Thank you for taking the time to read the information and consider taking part in the research.**

Please check the boxes below if you agree with the statements and wish to proceed to the study:

I have read and understood the online consent and participation information (version 2.1, dated 18.11.20) and have had the opportunity to ask any questions (should I need to).

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time during the online survey for any reason without my participation rights being affected.

I understand that by checking this box in the information and consent form I am giving my consent to taking part in this survey and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.