**Participant Information Sheet**

**Study Title**: An exploration of the concepts of compassion in UK and Sri Lankan students.

**Researcher**: Majuwana Gamage Lasara Kavindi Kariyawasam

**ERGO number:** 52533

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 to sign a consent form.

**What is the research about?**

This research is conducted as part of my PhD. I am a first year psychology PhD student at the University of Southampton, UK. I aim to understand the differences of levels of compassion and concepts related to compassion (such as barriers and facilitators of compassion and other influences), among a cross cultural group of British and Sri Lankan students. I also aim to understand the relationship between compassion and Depression, and compassion and Anxiety. The research will involve a battery of questionnaires starting with a demographic questionnaire. The objective of this study is to understand whether compassion levels and its concepts differ based on culture. This will provide the foundation for future studies aiming at introducing culturally sensitive practices using the compassionate framework with people presented with psychological complications in Sri Lanka.

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

In this study, I aim to recruit British and Sri Lankan students undertaking an undergraduate degree in psychology. To participate in this study, you should be above 18 years of age, pursuing an undergraduate degree in psychology and be either Sri Lankan or British national. Participants will only be recruited if they are happy to participate on a voluntary basis.

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

Data will be gathered through an online survey. Once you click on the link to the survey, you will receive an information sheet and a page to provide your consent. Participation for this study is voluntary and you do not have to take part if you do not intend to. Once you click on a box that requires your consent, you will be directed to a demographic page and the questionnaires. First, you will be asked to state your age, gender and nationality and religion. Then you will be directed to the series of questionnaires. The whole study will take approximately 30 minutes. Once you submit your answers, you will be directed to a debriefing sheet which will provide you further information of the study, contact details of the researcher and contact details of psychological helplines. You will also be provided with a link to an online self-help page which will be useful with everyday psychological problems. In addition, a link to an online breathing exercise video, which will help you to calm down if you feel distressed.

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

There is no direct benefit to you as a participant although British students will be given 4 credits for their course. Although there is no direct benefit of taking part, your participation is much appreciated and will contribute to the broadening of our understanding about levels of compassion and its influences across two different cultures.

**Are there any risks involved?**

There should be no major risks involved in taking part in this study. However, if you experience any distress during the completion of the questionnaire or if you wish to learn about ‘self-help’ in relation to depression, anxiety or any psychological distress, we have provided a self-help guide and links to support services along with a debriefing statement. A link to an online breathing exercise video will also be available in the debriefing statement. You can either click on the link and watch the video or terminate the study by closing the tab once you have read the debriefing statement.

**What data will be collected?**

All data will be collected in the form of a quantitative online survey. Firstly, participant’s informed consent will be collected. Next, participants will be required to state demographic information such as age, gender, nationality and religion. Personal information such as gender and religion will be required to compare and contrast the influences of these factors on participants’ levels of compassion across the two countries. This type of information is considered as special category data according to data protection. Personal data will be handled with respect and stored securely. After the demographic information has been obtained, participants will be directed to the next page containing the questionnaires. Participants’ names or identifiable characters will not be required or recorded anywhere and all the collected information will be stored under a random allocated number. All email addresses used to contact the participants will be stored in a password protected computer and deleted once the study has been conducted. You will not be contacted for any purpose other than for this particular study.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. In fact, information collected from you (e.g., religion, nationality) will be kept confidential in line with the University of Southampton Ethics Policy and the Data Protection Act (1998) and the university policy.

Only members of the research team (researcher and research supervisors) and responsible members of the University of Southampton may 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.

As previously detailed, will be stored securely under a random allocated number in a password encrypted computer. You (participants) will only be referred by the number allocated to you and your name will not be required, noted or stored anywhere. You are also allowed to withdraw your participation at any time and withdraw your consent for us to use your information. Gathered information will be stored in a password protected computer where only the researcher and research supervisor will have access to.

The list of participants’ email addresses (only for Sri Lankan participants) will be noted in a document and stored separately on a password protected computer. The email addresses will be deleted from the computer once the study has been completed.

**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 tick a box, indicating your consent to take part. If you are studying in Sri Lanka, you will be informed about this study by an email that will be forwarded to you via your university. This email will contain this information sheet comprising all the information necessary for you to understand the purpose of this study. This email will also contain my email address (primary researcher contact information) should you have any concerns or questions prior to taking part. The email sent to you will provide you with a link to the study. Once you click on the link, you can tick the consent box and continue your participation.

If you are a student of the University of Southampton, a study advert will be posted on eFolio, where you can click on and sign up. Once you sign up, you will be directed to the study starting with a consent statement that needs to be ticked (as proof of your consent). Once this consent box has been ticked, you will be directed to the questionnaires for your participation.

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

You may withdraw your participation at any time during the study with no penalty as your

participation is strictly voluntary. If you decide to withdraw any information you have provided it

will not be used in the study. Therefore, please note that you have all the right to withdraw your consent for your data to be used after you have participated in the study without providing any justification. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me (Lasara) via [lkk1n17@soton.ac.uk](mailto:lkk1n17@soton.ac.uk)

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

Results of the research will be submitted to the University of Southampton as part of my PhD research. This study is also expected to be published in a peer reviewed journal. If you wish to

receive a copy of the results, you can contact the researcher at lkk1n17@soton.ac.uk.

Gathered anonymous data will be stored for a minimum of 10 years abided by the University of

Southampton policy and deleted completely from the database afterwards.

Anonymised interview transcripts will be retained for future studies. These transcripts will always be stored in a password protected computer and will not contain any identifiable data of the participants.

Please see the contact details below should you wish to file a complaint.

Primary researcher (Lasara Kariyawasam)

[Lkk1n17@soton.ac.uk](mailto:Lkk1n17@soton.ac.uk)

Primary supervisor

[M.S.Ononaiye@soton.ac.uk](mailto:M.S.Ononaiye@soton.ac.uk)

University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance manager

[rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)

**Where can I get more information?**

You can contact the primary researcher or research supervisor using the contact details below.

Researcher (Lasara Kariyawasam)

[Lkk1n17@soton.ac.uk](mailto:Lkk1n17@soton.ac.uk)

Office 4115  
School of Psychology

Shackelton Building

University of Southampton  
SO17 1BJ

Primary supervisor (Dr. Margo Ononaiye)

[M.S.Ononaiye@soton.ac.uk](mailto:M.S.Ononaiye@soton.ac.uk)

Office 3089

School of Psychology  
Shackelton Building

University of Southampton  
SO17 1BJ

**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.

Researcher: Lasara Kariyawasam [lkk1n17@soton.ac.uk](mailto:lkk1n17@soton.ac.uk)

Primary Supervisor: Dr. Margo Ononaiye [M.S.Ononaiye@soton.ac.uk](mailto:M.S.Ononaiye@soton.ac.uk)

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.**

**I would sincerely thank you for taking your time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.**

***Please read the following statements and tick the box below if you agree to the statements and consent to voluntarily take part in this research.***

I have read and understood the information sheet (*21/08/19 /version 1 of participant information sheet*) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time for any reason without my participation rights being affected.

Please tick (check) this box to indicate that you have read the above statements and that you consent to taking part in this survey.