**Participant Information Sheet**

**Study Title**: Exploring the understanding of the concepts of compassion in Sri Lankan students

**Researcher**: Majuwana Gamage Lasara Kavindi Kariyawasam

**ERGO number:** 49326

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 whether the notion of compassion is a culturally sensitive concept among Sri Lankan students. The research will involve me asking general questions about your thoughts around compassion and the possible influence that your upbringing, society/social relationships and religion may have on your understanding of this concept. The questions will involve exploring what participants think of the terms compassion and self-compassion, whether they consider themselves to be compassionate and whether they believe that their upbringing, society and religion have taught them to be compassionate towards themselves and others. The objective of this study is to understand whether compassion is a common concept understood by the Sri Lankan student community. 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 up to 25 Sri Lankan students undertaking an undergraduate degree in psychology. Therefore, you have been asked to participate as an undergraduate student living in Sri Lanka. You should be above 18 years of age and Sri Lankan national. Participants will only be recruited if they are happy to be interviewed on a voluntary basis.

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

You will be invited to a face-to-face semi-structured interview with myself (primary researcher) in which you will be asked about your understanding of compassion. Prior to these questions, you will also be asked to state your age, gender, religion and nationality in a demographic sheet provided to you. There will be no right or wrong answers to the questions asked and therefore, please do **NOT** make any preparations to answer these questions. You are only expected to share your opinion/experience related to the questions being asked. You do not have to know the terms discussed. You will be given this information sheet before the interview and a debriefing sheet after the interview has been conducted. The interview will only begin once you have given your informed consent and completed the demographic sheet. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to participate if you do not wish to do so. The interview may take up to 60 minutes. You have the right to discontinue the interview or withdraw from the study anytime if you wish to do so without providing a justification. You will only need to meet me (the interviewer) once for the study and the interview will take place in a quiet environment in your institute where no one could overhear the interview. You will not be contacted again regarding this study once the interview has finished. You can however contact me should you require more information about the study or should you wish to withdraw. Please note that anonymised information (information that you provide in the demographic sheet) cannot be withdrawn once the interview has been conducted. Your interview information/recordings can be destroyed and, this information can be withdrawn should you require this within one week from the date of the interview. Interview data will be transcribed after a week from the interview date and therefore, cannot be withdrawn after this one-week period. It is important that you are aware that the interview will be audio recorded using an encrypted audio device and, audio recordings are required for this study (for obtained qualitative data to be transcribed). The interview data will be transcribed and the audio recordings will be permanently destroyed afterwards. Once your data has been recorded and transcribed, your anonymised data will be analysed using the knowledge of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), to explore the Sri Lankan students’ thoughts around the concepts of compassion. The demographic data and the information collected during the interview will not reveal your name or any identifiable information and therefore your confidentiality is guaranteed. The information collected from you (including the things discussed in the interview) will be saved under a number that is assigned to you and therefore, your name will not be revealed at any point of the study.

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

There is no direct benefit to you as a participant although I would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding the study or discuss about the study once the interview has been conducted. I expect to meet you in person for the interview at your most convenient time in your educational institute (ICBT College) in the month of September, 2019, hoping that the interview would take place at your ease. Your participation is much appreciated and will contribute to the broadening of our understanding about compassion practice in the Sri Lankan student society.

**Are there any risks involved?**

This study is only conducted in the form of a face-to-face interview which will not result in any physical damage/risk. You will only be asked questions about your opinion and experience around the concepts of compassion and you are free to decide what you do or do not want to share in the interview. However, some of the questions discussed may lead you to recall unpleasant memories/ tough times and therefore, it is possible that you may feel slightly distressed. Therefore, if at any point do you feel uncomfortable, you may stop the interview or take a break. Additionally, once the interview has been conducted, you will be given a demographic sheet which will provide you a link to an online breathing exercise video, which will help you to calm down (I will be happy to show this video after the interview or you can decide whether you want to go home and watch the video after the interview). The debriefing sheet will also provide contact details of psychological helplines and a link to a self-help guide.

**What data will be collected?**

As the primary researcher, I will be collecting data. Firstly, participant’s written informed consent form will be collected. Next, demographic information of participant such as age, gender and religion will be noted. Personal information such as gender and religion will be required to explore whether the understanding of compassion varies based on religion, age, gender and/or nationality etc. 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 noting the demographic information, interview will begin with the researcher asking the participant about their understanding of compassion and memories of giving and receiving compassion. The entire interview will be audio recorded as consented by the participants in the consent form, using an encrypted audio device.

We will require participants’ email address to contact the participants to arrange a time and date for the interview only, and this information will be stored separately from the assigned participant number. All email addresses will be stored in a password protected computer and deleted once the interview data has been analysed. 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).

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, participant information including the consent forms and audio recordings will be stored securely. You (participants) will only be referred to by a given number and participant names will not be required, noted or stored anywhere (other than in the consent form which will be stored securely in a separate place). Some of the statements given by you may be directly quoted in the reports although quotes will be referred by the number allocated to you and not by your identifiable name. The collected consent forms will always be stored in the researcher’s research office room in a lockable cupboard and, audio recordings will be transferred to a password protected computer (original recordings recorded from the recording device will be deleted once these have been transferred to the computer). Recordings will then be transcribed and destroyed permanently once transcribed.

All the collected data will be stored with the researcher and only be shared with the supervisors if necessary.

The list of participants’ email addresses 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. In addition, the consent forms collected from you will be securely placed in a lockable cupboard with access restricted to the researcher and supervisors only.

**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 sign a consent form to show that you have agreed to take part. You will be informed about this study by an email that will be forwarded to you via your university. This email will contain the 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) requiring you to contact me, should you wish to take part. I will then discuss with you about a convenient time and date for the interview via email.

**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 agree to participate and then decide to withdraw before meeting me for the interview, you can inform me by emailing. If you wish to change the time and/or date of the interview you can also do so by emailing me. Once we meet for the actual interview and if you wish to withdraw right before, during or after the interview you can still do so by talking to me verbally. We will then destroy the data collected up to that point and remove you from the study as per your request. If you decide to withdraw from the study after participating in the interview, you can do so by emailing me within a week from the date of the interview. Please note that the anonymised data (such as your age and religion) cannot be removed once they have been submitted. Interview recordings will be transcribed after a week from the interview date and therefore, interview information cannot be withdrawn after the one-week period. Thus, we will keep the information that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only. As previously mentioned, your information will be kept confidential and your name or identity will not be revealed at any point of this study.

If you are interested in taking part in this study, please email me at lkk1n17@soton.ac.uk (Lasara Kariyawasam).

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

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you without your specific consent. In fact, all the information that will be recorded or stored will only be recorded and stored under a random number that will be allocated to you. Therefore, your personal identity or name will not be exposed at any time during or after the study.

Once the data has been obtained and the study has been completed, this research will be submitted to the University of Southampton as part of my doctoral degree and be published in a peer reviewed journal. I would be happy to provide you a copy of the results if you require as such. Your personal details however will remain strictly confidential throughout and you will not be directly identifiable from any report or publication at any point.

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

Primary supervisor

M.S.Ononaiye@soton.ac.uk

University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance manager

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

Office 4115
School of Psychology

Shackelton Building

University of Southampton
SO17 1BJ

Primary supervisor (Dr. Margo Ononaiye)

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

Primary Supervisor: Dr. Margo Ononaiye 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).

**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).

**Thank you.**

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