**Participant Information Sheet**

**Study Title**: Investigating the psychometric properties of the Dissociation-Integration of Self-States Scale (D-ISS) in a clinical sample

**Researcher**: Jamie Barton

**ERGO number:** 90495

**IRAS number:** 335221

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?**

My name is Jamie Barton, and I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist and Postgraduate Researcher at the University of Southampton. This research represents the thesis project required to be awarded a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych). This research will be overseen by the School of Psychology within the university and has been fully sponsored by the University of Southampton.

**Dissociation can be defined as a disconnection between a person’s thoughts, memories, feelings, actions, or sense of who they are.** Many people may experience dissociation during their life and everyone’s experience of dissociation is different. Previous research suggests a connection between dissociation and poorer treatment outcomes in psychological therapy. Thus, early detection and an effective means for measuring dissociation are crucial in the provision of psychological therapy.

Dissociation can result in a person feeling disconnected from their sense of identity, affecting their overall sense of ‘self’. We all have different aspects or parts of ourselves, different ways of being in different situations, these are sometimes called 'self-states'. These self-states involve a sense of identity, choice, values, and will. Some of us have bigger differences between self-states and some of us find it hard to remain in control of which self-state we are in. Some people even feel that they have very separate self-states, they might feel they have different selves residing within one body.

We are investigating a new scale for identifying and measuring dissociation in terms of ‘self-states’, including your awareness and perceptions of self-states, which currently there is a lack of measure for in clinical practice. The data collected will help our understanding of whether this new scale reliably measures individual’s experiences and whether it is a valid and reliable measure for individuals with a mental health diagnosis.

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

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are aged 18+ and have identified that you have a mental health diagnosis provided by a mental health professional. You do not need to have a dissociative disorder to participate in this study.

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

You will be invited to complete **four brief anonymised questionnaires**, **now, and again in two weeks’ time**. Questionnaires will be completed online; access will be provided via a QR code and/or hyperlink. The questionnaires will consist of items in relation to demographics, dissociative experiences, self-understanding, and emotional distress. This process should take **approximately** **20-30 minutes**. You will be asked to ensure that you have submitted a response for ALL questions before moving on to the next form.

You will be redirected to a separate online form after completing the questionnaires, you will have the option to provide your email address if you would like the researcher to send you a new online link to complete the same set of online questionnaires a second time 14 days later. **Your anonymity cannot be guaranteed if you choose to provide your email address, however, this information will be stored separately from your questionnaire data on a secure, password protected laptop.**

**You will be presented with a 5-digit participant ID number. Please make a note of this unique number and keep it somewhere safe, as you will need this if you opt to complete the second part of the research study.**

After you have completed the online questionnaires, you will be asked to indicate whether you consent to the researcher contacting you via email to share a URL hyperlink to complete the same set of online questionnaires again 14 days later. Please remember you will need to provide your 5-digit participant ID number to complete the second part of the research study.

Please do not hesitate to contact the researcher (contact details shown below) if you have any difficulties attempting to access the online questionnaires. After you have completed and submitted all five forms you will be provided with a debrief, providing further information about the study and how your data will contribute to this research.

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

You will be provided a £5 Amazon voucher to thank you for your time and participation. After you have completed the online questionnaires, you will be presented with a separate online webform where you can choose to submit your email address so that the researcher can send you your voucher via email. The researcher will aim to send you the voucher within one week of you submitting the online forms.

If you complete the online questionnaires again 14 days later, you will be redirected to an online form where you can resubmit your email address and be awarded another £5 Amazon voucher. You can therefore receive up to £10 in Amazon vouchers if you choose to complete both parts of the research study.

**What data will be collected?**

Data will be collected via online questionnaire. Data will include relevant demographic information (age, gender, race and ethnicity) and responses for several online questionnaires about dissociative experiences and emotional distress. It will not be possible to identify you from this data.

You will be asked to complete a separate form after having completed the online questionnaires, to submit your email address to claim your £5 Amazon voucher(s). This is to ensure that your email address is collected and stored separately from your questionnaire data.

The questionnaires you will be asked to complete involve rating how statements best apply to you on various numbered scales. All data will be stored securely on the university server and accessed remotely via a password-protected computer or laptop, in line with university data policy and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity. In accordance with our Research Data Management Policy, data will be held for 10 years after the study has finished when it will be securely destroyed.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the research will be kept strictly confidential. Only members of the research team 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. These people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential. Furthermore, it will not be possible to identify you from the data collected.

**Do I have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign an online consent form 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 or experience of care being affected. If you email the researcher at

[D-ISS@soton.ac.uk](mailto:D-ISS@soton.ac.uk), and provide your 5-digit participant ID (provided to you when accessing the online questionnaires), the researcher will be able to manually remove your questionnaire data. **Please note that due to the researcher’s academic deadlines and commitments, you must contact them before 1st April 2025 if you wish for your questionnaire data to be removed from the final report.** Please note that by emailing the researcher and providing your participant ID, you are effectively forfeiting your anonymity, but this is only so that your data can be removed from the research study and deleted.

Please note, if you are unable to provide your 5-digit participant ID, the researcher will be unable remove your questionnaire data, as the data is anonymised, and we cannot trace the information back to you without your participant ID. In this instance, we will keep the anonymised information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only.

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

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. The results of our study will be published in a research report. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you. This report will be submitted for marking by module staff and moderation by university staff. External examiners may also request a copy of this report if needed.

With your consent, to make the most of your participation and support efficient advancements in science, any anonymised data/samples may be used for future research. We cannot tell you at this moment in time what this research will entail or what analyses will be carried out but we can ensure you that all appropriate legal, ethical and other approval will be in place. For practical reasons your consent will not be sought again. Your data will not be used for commercial purposes.

Unless any further action is required to resolve any complaints or appeals against the study, all data will be destroyed after a ten-year period following the study’s conclusion, in compliance with the University of Southampton’s data storage policy. Access may need to be extended for the University of Southampton’s Ethics Committee and any other relevant authorities in the event of an audit, complaint or appeal against the study.

**Where can I get more information?**

For more information about this study, please contact the researchers: Jamie Barton and Tess Maguire ([D-ISS@soton.ac.uk](mailto:D-ISS@soton.ac.uk)).

If you would like to receive a copy of the final report/result, you can either contact the researcher via email, or by using the online form which you be redirected after completing the online questionnaires, ensuring you click ‘yes’ for the question ‘I would like to receive a copy of the research results and final report’, and provide your email address in the relevant box on the same form.

If you have any questions regarding the conduct or ethics of this study, you are advised to contact the following:

Chair of the Ethics Committee, Psychology, University of Southampton, Southampton, SO17 1BJ

**Phone:** +44 (0)23 8059 3856

**Email:** fshs-rso@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

(D-ISS@soton.ac.uk) 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 Head of Research Ethics and Clinical Governance (023 8059 5058, [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)).

**Are there any risks involved?**

It is very important that you feel safe and supported during your participation in this study. Participation will not involve any physical risks. If you experience discomfort or distress from completing the online questionnaires, you can contact the following services for support:

* The Samaritans offer free support to anyone over the telephone any time of the day.  
  Tel – 116 123  
  Website – [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)
* National Suicide Prevention Helpline offers free support to anyone with thoughts of suicide any time of the day.   
  Tel – 0800 689 5652   
  Website: <https://www.spbristol.org/NSPHUK>

* HOPELINEUK offers free support to those under the age of 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide. The line is open from 9am-12am (midnight).

Tel – 0800 068 4141   
Website – <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/contact-us/>

The following websites provide freely accessible self-help resources aimed at supporting individuals who are experiencing mental health difficulties:

* **NHS Self Help Guides -** [www.selfhelpguides.ntw.nhs.uk/southampton](http://www.selfhelpguides.ntw.nhs.uk/southampton/)
* **Mind -** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

If you continue to feel distressed following taking part in this study, you can also discuss this with the research supervisor, Dr Tess Maguire at [D-ISS@soton.ac.uk](mailto:D-ISS@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.

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 reading this information sheet and considering taking part in this research.**

**A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated**