

We invite you to participate in an online survey examining the relationship between gratitude and the levels of burden experienced by carers of people with severe mental illnesses. The study is supervised by Professor Paul Morrison at Murdoch University.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study seeks to establish whether a person's sense of gratitude may influence the burden caregivers experience when helping people with severe mental illnesses manage their daily lives. This is a forerunner to the development of a resource that could be designed to lessen the burden that carers of people with severe mental illness experience.

Why are we examining the relationship between gratitude and carer burden?

Studies have shown that high levels of burden reduce caregivers' wellbeing. Studies have also shown that feelings of gratitude lead to higher levels of wellbeing. However, it is unknown if being more inclined towards experiencing gratitude reduces carer burden.

Why have you been approached to participate in this study?

You have been identified as a member of an Australian carer organisation, and may potentially be caring for someone with a severe mental illness. We ask that you only complete the questionnaire if you are caring for someone with a severe mental illness, which may include schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, borderline personality disorder, and delusional disorder.

What this study involves.

We would be pleased if you could complete the questionnaire below. This questionnaire was developed to gather information about the relationship between gratitude and the level of burden experienced by people who care for others with severe mental illnesses. There are no right or wrong answers as we are interested in *your* own experience of caring for someone with a severe mental illness. The questionnaire should take less than 15 minutes to complete.

Possible benefits

You will not benefit directly from participating in the survey, however, your involvement will assist us in gaining an understanding of how gratitude and carer burden are associated. This understanding will guide the development of an intervention that could promote feelings of gratitude, which when delivered to carers of people with severe mental illnesses may decrease the burden they experience.

Possible risks

There are no anticipated risks. However, it is acknowledged that having the opportunity to detail the challenges of caring for another person with a serious mental illness may elicit feelings of upset for some people. If you do become upset and wish to seek support for your distress, we encourage you to either ring Lifeline on 131114 or contact the researchers, on the details provided below, and they will then arrange a counseling service.

What happens to the results?

A plain language written summary of the study will be made publically available on Murdoch University School of Health Professions website once the study has been completed. We would also be pleased to provide you with a copy of the study's results upon request. In addition, the results of the overall study may be presented at conferences, and they may also be presented in published articles. You will not be identified individually in any reports which use material from the survey questionnaire as all responses are anonymous. Only staff involved in the Project will have access to the data. Copies of the questionnaire data will be stored on a Murdoch University password protected database for five years.

Voluntary participation-What happens if I say no?

Before deciding to participate in this study, you may wish to discuss your involvement with a relative or friend. You should feel free to do this.

It is important to understand that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Choosing to participate, or not participate, will not affect your relationship with the Murdoch University.

What if I have a question about the study?

If you have any questions before, during or after the study, you may contact Dr Norman Stomski at Murdoch University either on (08) 93606038 or N.Stomski@murdoch.edu.au or Professor Paul Morrison on (08) 9582 5502 or P.Morrison@murdoch.edu.au

Ethical Issues

This project has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number 2016/215). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677, for overseas studies, +61 8 9360 6677) or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.