

With You – Project Protocol



INFORMED AND VOLUNTARY CONSENT

All participants will be provided with a participant pack prior to the consultation, which will be adapted for each target group. It will include:

- The participant consent and information form, containing plain English information about the project, what their participation will involve, consent information and contact details for the project team and Legal Aid NSW in case they have any concerns.
- The list of consultation questions specific to the relevant target group, from the question matrix.

Participation registration, information and consent and demographic data collection forms all clearly state that participation is voluntary, and participants can choose not to answer questions or can withdraw their involvement at any time. Before requesting any demographic data, relevant documentation provides an explanation for the purpose of this data collection, as well as the fact that data will be deidentified and only used for project purposes.

Before each interview, the facilitator will confirm the information in the participant consent and information form has been understood and provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions and confirm information. Each participant will provide consent, either written or verbal in the interview recording. Team members are contactable before and after consultations by phone or email to answer questions, provide additional or supplementary information and to respond to any feedback provided by participants.

RESPONDING TO DISTRESS

Should a participant become distressed during a consultation, team members will respond sensitively and be guided by what the participant wants or tells the team.

Team members will:

- Respond to signs of possible distress calmly.
- Stop or pause the interview to check in with the participant.
- Listen to and be guided by what the participant tells team members.
- Make time to speak to the person about what is going on for them, privately if the person would prefer.
- Make any adjustments possible to better accommodate the participant's needs – e.g. take a 10 minute break, offer to continue conversation one-on-one if group setting is not working, open/close a door.
- Explain that they do not need to stay or to continue the interview. Tell the participant that they will be provided with a gift card regardless.
- Continue the consultation if this is what the participant wants.
- Offer to follow up with the participant after the interview to check in and find out if they would like any additional support.

All team members are experienced in codesign or bring lived experience of poor mental health, or both.

RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS

Complaints or feedback about the project can be directed to the core project team at the MHTP@maylea.com.au email address, project phone number, or directly to members of the team. The project is committed to responding meaningfully to complaints and feedback about the project.

The team will:

- Give the person the time and opportunity to fully articulate themselves, over the phone or via email according to the person's preference.
- Listen openly and calmly to all complaints and feedback.
- Make notes of the person's complaints and feedback in a document on the shared drive.
- Apologise for any distress or upset caused.
- Thank the person for taking the time to get in touch with their complaint or feedback.
- Escalate any serious or sensitive complaints/feedback to Maylea.

- Discuss general complaints/feedback at team operational meetings for possible actioning.
- Follow up with person with any changes made in response to complaint/feedback if there are any.



RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE WITH A LIVED EXPERIENCE

In line with codesign best practice principles, consumers and carers, family members and supporters who participate in an interview or focus group will receive gift cards to recognise their time, expertise and contribution.

Those who participate in one hour individual consultations will receive a \$100 gift card, those who attend two hour group consultations will receive a \$200 gift card. Participants who travel to a consultation will also be offered additional gift cards to contribute to fuel or public transport costs (\$0.78 per kilometre, rounded up to the nearest multiple of \$5). As team members are travelling interstate to enable face-to-face consultation where this is participant preference, covering accommodation costs will not be necessary. Legal Aid NSW has provided funding into a GiftPay account which the project team will draw on for this purpose and gift cards will be issued on a weekly basis.

DATA

The team will aim to collect key demographic data from all participants, including survey participants, who voluntarily consent to providing it. Collecting demographic data will allow the project to identify patterns across consultations on the basis of the shared experiences or identities of participants. Different data will be collected for people who have used legal services, carers/supporters/kin/family, and professionals.

Collection

The team will use flexible collection methods that allow participants to choose a preferred method. Data may be collected over the phone by a team member, and entered directly into a spreadsheet. Alternatively, participants may provide data as part of filling out a Participant Information and Consent Form in hard or softcopies. An online data collection form, tailored for each group, is also available and will most likely be used to collect data in a private manner from those participating in focus groups. The survey will begin with demographic data collection for all those completing it.

All data collection forms clearly note that providing demographic data is voluntary, and participants can choose not to answer questions or can withdraw their involvement at any time. Before requesting any demographic data, relevant documentation also provides an explanation for the purpose of this data collection, as well as the fact that data will be deidentified and only used for project purposes.

Protection and Confidentiality

All demographic data, consultation recordings and transcripts will be stored on a password protected drive, to which only core project team members have access.

Initial transcripts will be checked, corrected and deidentified by core project team members. De Identification involves replacing participant names with codes, as well as removing other identifying information, such as the location of participants, should it be mentioned in the consultation.

Project Coordinators will code the transcript data using NVivo software. This involves tagging transcripts as, for example, with a 'regional lawyer', allowing meaningful but deidentified conclusions to be made. Coded and deidentified transcripts can then be analysed by the team.

No quotes or stories shared by participants will form part of the final reports or other outputs of the project. Rather, the team will be identifying themes arising from consultations and survey responses broadly, as well as those that participants who share particular experiences or identities have raised in common.

All academic software used to support the project's work is password-protected with access held by core project team members only.