



Participant Information Statement

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Living in Recovery: Supporting the wellbeing of workers with injury using digital compassion-based approaches **Information Statement for Participants**

You are invited to participate in the research project identified above which is being conducted by Dr Jamin Day, Professor Alan Hayes, Dr Margaret Freestone and Emma Freestone from the Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle; and Dr James Kirby, School of Psychology, University of Queensland.

This project has been funded by Insurance and Care, NSW (icare).

Why is the research being done?

Researchers from the University of Newcastle are developing a new, online program for workers with injury. The program uses compassion focused approaches to help workers maintain good psychological, social and emotional wellbeing during recovery from a work-related injury.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate a pilot version of a new digital program and see whether people find it helpful, engaging, and easy to use. This pilot program is Phase II of a research project, which builds on more than 12 months of earlier Phase I co-design work to identify how compassion-focused approaches might be used to support the emotional and psychological wellbeing of workers with injury. Access to the program is currently free for workers who have experienced a work-related injury in the last 12 months resulting in time off work.

Who can participate in the research?

You may be eligible to participate if you have had time off work due to a workplace injury within the last 12 months. This could be from either a physical injury, or a non-physical injury such as work-related stress. If you have received an invitation to participate in this study by your case manager or through your insurance provider, you can participate if you want to.

You should not take part in this research if you:

- Have had a serious injury requiring complex surgery
- Have experienced significant trauma, or have significant mental health difficulties
- Are involved in any legal action or a dispute with your employer

If you think you might be eligible and would like to find out more, feel free to contact us.

What would you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be provided with free access to an online, self-guided digital program. You can complete the program in your own time and at your own pace, although we recommend practicing the strategies in between modules to get the most benefit from it.

As this is a research project, participants will be asked to complete a set of questionnaires at the start and again after 4 weeks. We have included a set of established measures that ask about your mental health and wellbeing, your experience of compassion, and your thoughts and feelings about returning to work. These questionnaires should only take about 15-20 minutes to complete, delivered through the website as part of the online program. Access to the rest of the program will open once you have completed the first set of questionnaires. After four weeks, we will send an email reminder to do the second set of questionnaires. We will send up to three email reminders in total.

Features of the online program include:

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- A series of psychoeducational videos focusing on understanding the function of our 'tricky' brains, the role of emotions, and what we mean by compassion and how it can help – delivered by a 'virtual therapist' and engaging animations.
- Audio tracks to help you practice guided meditations from the comfort of your home. These are designed from a compassion-focused perspective to help you build wisdom, strength and commitment to help maintain positive emotional wellbeing during difficult times
- Interactive well-being check-ups and self-monitoring designed to help you keep track of your progress
- Downloadable tip sheets you can print or save to refer to at any time

What choice do you have?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. Your choice to participate or not participate will not disadvantage you in any way and will have no impact on your current claim. You do not need to inform your case manager about your participation unless you want to.

If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. The research team will withdraw any data you have provided, other than any data that has already been deidentified for analysis or included in publications or conference presentations.

How much time will it take?

The current program is a pilot and contains six modules. Each module contains video and audio tracks, some reading, and some short exercises. If you do everything, it may take between 15 and 30 minutes to complete each module. Free access to the pilot as part of the evaluation will remain open until the 15th of January 2021, unless otherwise extended for the purpose of completing the pilot evaluation.

You could complete all the modules in one day if you like. However, to get the maximum benefit from the program, we encourage participants to complete one to two modules per week and practice the guided meditations regularly. This is because previous research has shown that people who practice the skills tend to show the most gains in terms of their mental health and wellbeing.

What are the risks and benefits of participating?

We recognise that having a work-related injury can be a difficult time for people. This is even more difficult if it results in time off work. If you have spent any time off work, you might have noticed a range of difficult thoughts or emotions, such as anger, frustration, worry or sadness.

Many of the supports available for injured workers are medical in nature or focus on intensive psychological treatments such as therapy. However, some people are reluctant to seek out these supports, or even have difficulties leaving the house to access services. And while many intensive supports are now available through Zoom or similar platforms, some people would simply like to access 'light touch' supports from home, with the confidence that the strategies are backed by research and evidence.

It is our hope that by doing the exercises in this program and engaging with them, you will notice significant improvements in your own emotional wellbeing; or alternatively learn some skills that will help you to protect your emotional wellbeing when things get tough.

In terms of risks from participating, your choice to participate or not to participate will in no way affect any claims for workers compensation. This includes any active, past or future claims, or any claims that are currently being evaluated.

There is however a chance that as you do this program you will experience difficult thoughts or feelings. This may make you feel uncomfortable at times. It is our belief that to work with difficult thoughts and emotions, we must spend at least a little bit of time noticing them. If however at any time you should feel distressed and require additional support, we encourage you to visit <http://beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support> or contact one of the following:

- Emergency services (000)
- Suicide Call Back Service (1300 659 476)
- Lifeline (13 11 14)
- BeyondBlue (1300 22 4636)

How will your privacy be protected?

We will not share your personal information with icare, your case manager or scheme agent, or any other organisation or group outside of the research team.

Any information collected by the researchers which might identify you will be stored securely and only accessed by the researchers, unless you consent otherwise or as required by law. All data is collected and stored on a private and secure Sydney-based server provided by Vultr (<https://www.vultr.com/legal/privacy/>). This server is only accessible by members of the University of Newcastle research team. icare and any other organisation(s) involved in your claim will not be given access to your data nor will they be able to identify you or access any information you provide within the online program.

Data will be retained securely for a minimum period of 5 years from completion of the research and managed/stored in accordance with the University's Research Data and Materials Management Guideline (see <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=72>) or any successor Guideline, and applicable University of Newcastle policy provisions (as amended from time to time).

When we report on the results of this research, we will not disclose information that might identify participants.

How will the information collected be used?

The information collected will be used to inform the ongoing development of the digital resources. We may describe our findings in academic publications or presentations, though no identifiable data will be included. Data will be de-identified through the use of randomly generated keys that do not incorporate any identifying information.

Non-identifiable data may be also be shared with other parties to encourage scientific evaluation; to contribute to further research and public knowledge; or as required by law.

If you would like a copy of the summary of the results, please email the Chief Investigator, Dr Jamin Day at jamin.day@newcastle.edu.au after 1 December 2020.

What do you need to do to participate?

Please read this Information Statement carefully and make sure you understand it before you consent to participate.

If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, please contact the researcher.

If you would like to participate, please complete the online sign-up form at <https://livinginrecovery.com.au/signup>. To participate, you only need to provide a name and email address. We will not share or retain this information following project completion.

Further information

If you would like further information please contact Dr Jamin Day at Jamin.day@newcastle.edu.au or (02) 4033 9237.

Thank you for considering this invitation.



Dr Jamin Day
Chief Investigator & Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle

Research Team:
Dr James Kirby, School of Psychology, University of Queensland
Dr Margaret Freestone, Family Action Centre
Distinguished Professor Alan Hayes, Director, Family Action Centre

Complaints about this research

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2019-0328.

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Services, NIER Precinct, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 4921 6333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.