Participant Information Sheet

# Date that data collection will start:

1 April 2025

# Project Title

Exploring attitudes towards mental health in Aotearoa New Zealand

Kia ora,

You are invited to participate in research on attitudes towards mental health in Aotearoa New Zealand. This research is being conducted by Dr Stephanie Gomes-Ng from Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand. Other research team members from AUT include Dr Amy Kercher, Associate Professor Liesje Donkin, and Dr Erik Landhuis. Our team is supported by two research assistants from AUT, Tess Austin and Jacob Sawyer, and by Danny Mak, who is a postgraduate student in psychology. Danny is involved in this study as part of the research component for his Bachelor of Health Sciences (Honours) degree.

# What is the purpose of this research?

This research investigates New Zealanders’ attitudes towards mental health problems, and how spirituality or religious beliefs influences these attitudes. We aim to recruit at least 400 New Zealanders to complete an anonymous survey. The findings of this research will be used for Danny’s Honours research project in psychology, and may be used for academic publications and presentations.

# How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have received this information sheet because you would have seen advertisements on social media, posters around AUT campuses, or on other public or community notice boards.

Anybody over the age of 16 living in New Zealand is invited to participate in this research. You don’t have to be spiritual or religious to participate – anyone is welcome.

# How do I agree to participate in this research?

You can choose to participate in this research by clicking ‘next’ at the end of this information sheet, which will take you to the study. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. Your participation is anonymous, which means no identifying information is stored with your data. Submission of the completed survey will be taken as consent and agreement to participate.

You are free to withdraw at any time. To do this, simply close your browser window or the application (App) the survey is presented on. Any information you have entered up to that point will be deleted from the data set. Please note, because this is an anonymous survey, it will not be possible to withdraw your data after you have completed the survey.

# Prize Draw

After completing the survey, you can choose to enter a random prize draw for one of five $100 GiftPay vouchers. This will involve clicking a link which will take you to another survey, where you can enter the draw by providing your email address. Your email address will be stored separately from your data, and so cannot be linked to your responses to this survey.

# What will my participation involve?

After reading this information sheet, you can click “next” if you wish to participate in this study. During the study, you will be asked to answer some questions about your familiarity with mental health problems, what you think causes mental health problems, and how mental health problems can be treated. You will also be asked to read four short scenarios of hypothetical people with mental health problems, and answer some questions asking about your personal attitudes or opinions about each scenario. Finally, you will be asked to complete some basic demographic questions about yourself, such as your age and gender, and what your spiritual or religious beliefs are.

There are no right or wrong answers in this survey. We are interested in your own personal opinions, attitudes, and beliefs.

Because your participation in this research is anonymous, submission of your survey responses will be taken as your agreement to participate.

# What are the benefits?

Your participation will help us make a valuable contribution to increasing our knowledge of what influences attitudes towards mental health in Aotearoa. Additionally, this research will assist Danny in obtaining his Honours degree.

# What are the costs?

Participation in this research should take about 20 minutes of your time. There are no other costs. At the end of the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter a prize draw to win one of five $100 GiftPay vouchers.

# Will the results of the study be published?

The results of this research may be published in peer-reviewed, academic journals. Results may also be presented during conferences or seminars to wider professional and academic communities*.* You will not be identiﬁable in any publication or presentation.

# What are the discomforts and risks?

This study runs online, so you may experience some mild fatigue when completing it. This survey asks you to respond to questions asking how you feel about mental health problems, such as depression or schizophrenia. You may find some of these questions uncomfortable to answer.

# How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

To alleviate any potential fatigue, you can take breaks whenever you like during the study. You may also withdraw from the study at any time by closing your browser window. If you are uncomfortable with answering any questions about mental health in this survey, you may choose to withdraw at any time. To do so, simply close your browser window.

# What will happen to information about me?

All data collected during this study is anonymous, which means it cannot be used to identify you. During the study, data will be stored in the researchers’ password-protected Qualtrics survey account. Data will also be backed up to AUT’s network drive. Data will be stored indefinitely on a secure AUT network drive. Data will only be accessible to the researchers named on this information sheet.

Your email will be collected only for the purposes of the prize draw, and will be stored separately from your survey data. After the prize draw takes place, all emails will be permanently deleted.

# What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Data collection for this study will conclude on April 1, 2026.

# Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you wish, you may access a summary of the study findings after the study concludes. A summary will be posted to the following url: <https://tinyurl.com/mhxsummary>

# What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Stephanie Gomes-Ng, stef.gomes-ng@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9001 ext 27312.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, *ethics@aut.ac.nz*, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

# Who do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Danny Mak (Honours Student) – hoimak10@autuni.ac.nz

Tess Austin (Research Assistant) – wkp2922@autuni.ac.nz

Dr Amy Kercher – amy.kercher@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 5186

Dr Erik Landhuis – erik.landhuis@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 6645

Dr Liesje Donkin – liesje.donkin@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 8164

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Stephanie Gomes-Ng – stef.gomes-ng@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9001 ext 27312

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 27 March 2025, AUTEC Reference number 25/63*.***