



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Title: 'Validation of Disaster Relief Australia's Program to Support Veterans and First Responders to Grow Beyond Their Service'

Chief Investigator

Dr Dan Fassnacht
College of Education, Psychology, and Social Work
Flinders University
Tel: +61 8 82012621

Co-Investigator

Dr Kathina Ali
Flinders University, College of Education, Psychology, Social Work

Joep van Agteren
Matthew Iasiello
South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI)

Description of the study

Flinders University College of Education, Psychology, and Social Work are partnering with researchers from the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) and Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) to investigate wellbeing benefits that volunteering for DRA may bring to its volunteers.

The study will have two distinct parts. We will firstly follow DRA volunteers over the course of a year and measure their wellbeing every three months. We will compare those scores with a control cohort that does not volunteer at DRA to test for any differences in wellbeing outcomes. We will secondly test the specific impact that DRA deployments have on volunteer wellbeing. This done by running brief daily wellbeing surveys over a period of 14 days while volunteers are being deployed to provide disaster relief.

Purpose of the study

Volunteering has been linked to an increase in purpose, comradery and a sense of community, which in turn is linked to better mental health and wellbeing for those who participate in volunteering. This study aims to determine whether volunteering for the DRA program, which draws on the specific skillset that veterans and first responders have in providing relief after disasters, has a noticeable effect on wellbeing.

Benefits of the study

inspiring
achievement

By participating in this research, you will help us create new knowledge about the role that volunteering can play in improving mental health and wellbeing. A specific subgoal is to determine how volunteering efforts such as DRA's can help the wellbeing of ex-services staff.

By participating you furthermore will help us shed insight into the wellbeing needs of DRA volunteers, specifically during their deployments. This information can help DRA strengthen its service provision before, during and after deployment, to ensure volunteers can perform that role optimally and to safeguard their wellbeing during the sometimes tasking times of deployment.

Participant involvement and potential risks

If you agree to participate in the research study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a 10 - 15 minute online survey every three months, four in total.
- Participate in a 1-2 minute online survey for 14 days if you go on deployment during the 12 month study period.

Participation in all aspects of this research study is entirely voluntary. After the deployment you may be asked to participate in a follow-up interview: we will provide you with a different participant information sheet if this is the case.

The researchers do not expect the questions to cause any harm or discomfort to you. However, if you experience feelings of distress as a result of participation in this study, please let the research team know immediately. You can also contact the following services for support:

- Lifeline – 13 11 14, www.lifeline.org.au
- Open Arms - 1800 011 046, www.openarms.gov.au

Withdrawal Rights

You may, without any penalty, decline to take part in this research study. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you may, without any penalty, withdraw at any time without providing an explanation. To withdraw, please contact the Chief Investigator via the contact information below.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Privacy and confidentiality will be assured at all times and no wellbeing data will be shared with DRA. Access to your data is restricted to 1) researchers listed on this form and 2) a team of independent evaluators at the University of Canberra, with whom we will share your de-identified data, as they perform an overarching evaluation for projects funded by Movember.

The research outcomes may be presented at conferences, written up for publication or used for other research purposes as described in this information form. However, the privacy and confidentiality of individuals will be protected at all times. You will not be named, and your individual information will not be identifiable in any research products without your explicit consent.

Data Storage

The information collected may be stored securely on a password protected computer and/or server at Flinders University, SAHMRI and the University of Canberra. Any identifiable data will be de-identified for data storage purposes unless indicated otherwise. All data will be securely transferred to and stored at Flinders University, SAHMRI and the University of Canberra for at least five years, after publication of the results.

Following the required data storage period, all data will be securely destroyed according to university protocols. De-identified data may be used in future research studies, student projects, or funding applications.

How will I receive feedback?

On project completion, a short summary of the outcomes will be provided to all participants via email.

Ethics Committee Approval

The project has been approved by Flinders University's Human Research Ethics Committee (project ID 5362).

Queries and Concerns

Queries or concerns regarding the research can be directed to the research team. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office team via telephone 08 8201 2543 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet which is yours to keep. If you accept our invitation to be involved, please sign the consent form when you start the survey.
