Consent Form

Creative Therapy For Anxiety: A Group Counseling Experience

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You are invited to be part of a group within a research study for students who experience anxiety. You were selected as a candidate for this study based on your interest in participating in a counseling group called Creative Therapy for Anxiety. This document provides information about the study and its procedures and how it may benefit you as a participant. We ask that you read this form completely and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study and taking the next steps.

Researchers
Dr. Lisa S. Sosin, Ph.D, LPC, LLP, BACS; Michael T. Trexler, M.A., LPC; John J. S. Harrichand, M.A., Resident in Counseling; and Timothy A. Sosin, M.A. Resident in Counseling

Background Information
Many college students suffer with anxiety at levels that can hinder personal and academic success. They experience physical, emotional, and even spiritual discomfort during times of heightened anxiety. Perhaps you are experiencing these difficult feelings and situations. The purpose of this study is to help alleviate anxiety symptoms in the participants through a group experience and explore the experience of group participants during one post-treatment debriefing interview.

Creative Therapy for Anxiety
Creative Therapy for Anxiety is a counseling group designed to assist people in decreasing anxiety. This group teaches participants about anxiety and introduces the Creative Exposure Intervention, which was recently developed by Dr. Lisa Sosin and has been used with positive results in her counseling practice (Sosin & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2016). The intervention combines art and cognitive-behavior therapy interventions. The group will occur over the course of six (6) weeks followed by an individual debriefing session. Each group session will last 90 minutes in length, and the debriefing session will last up to 60 minutes.

The attached document entitled “Research Step by Step Process” describes the group and research project in detail. If you have questions about this consent form or the research, please feel free to ask us. We are happy to answer any questions you have. Additionally, please understand that while research will be conducted throughout this process to help understand the experience of participants who engage in the group, this is an actual counseling group with the sole purpose of helping you.
Pre-Group Procedures
You will be asked to sign this document and attend a pre-screening interview with Mike Trexler to determine if you would benefit from participating in this group counseling experience. During the pre-screening interview, you will be asked to complete the customary assessments given to all students receiving counseling at Student Counseling Services. If you have questions about these assessments, please address them with Mike Trexler at any time. Although these assessments will not be used for the purposes of our research, they are required to determine if the group is appropriate for you. Following interviews, the four researchers will meet to select members for the group. If you are selected for the group, you will be notified and receive information regarding when the group will start. If you are not selected, you will be provided with follow-up options and referrals based on your needs. All candidates, whether chosen or not will receive assistance in taking next steps toward alleviating their anxiety.

The Creative Exposure Group Procedures
The group will consist of 6-10 students, and it will be led by two of the researchers (Dr. Lisa Sosin and Mike Trexler) who are both licensed counselors. The group will meet for six weeks, and each session will last 90 minutes. During the first meeting, participants will take a brief survey entitled the DSM V Level II Anxiety Survey.

Post-Group Procedures
After the group sessions are completed, students will take the DSM V Level II Anxiety Survey again and participate in a debriefing interview (up to 60 minutes) with the two other researchers (John Harrichand and Tim Sosin), who both have their masters in clinical mental health counseling and are trained in research methods appropriate for counseling. The debriefing session includes a written survey and an audio-taped interview, which will be transcribed. Following the gathering of information and post-group interviews, the researchers will analyze the data using qualitative methods to determine how the study participants experienced the group. If the group is helpful to participants, the researchers may publish the findings in a counseling journal or present the findings at a counseling conference so that others can benefit from what has been discovered.

Participant Benefits
Research has revealed that the information and interventions you will learn in the Creative Counseling Group are highly effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety. Research also shows that results from participation in interventions of this nature are long-lasting (Barlow, 2014; Bazargan & Pakdaman, 2016).

Participant Risks
The risk of participating in this study is that participants may experience discomfort as they begin to face the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are linked to anxiety. It is normal for individuals to experience a temporary increase in anxiety symptoms as they invest in personal change. Additionally, there may be times when participating in the study may trigger traumatic memories or significantly distressing events. It is possible that participants may need more individualized treatment beyond the group. To minimize these
risks, a thorough assessment will be conducted to ensure that participants will be appropriate candidates for the group. Additionally, should individual counseling be indicated at any time during the group, participants will be referred to individual counselors at Student Counseling Services.

**Compensation**
Participants will not receive any financial compensation for participation in this study.

**Confidentiality**
All digital information such as emails and personal information and assessments will be kept private. We will maintain the privacy of each group member, and what happens in the group will stay in the group. We cannot guarantee that other group members will maintain confidentiality, but we will strongly encourage and explain the importance of confidentiality to the group and study. The records of this study will be kept private. In any report we publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Your name will be changed and any information that can be traced back to you will be deleted. Prior to analyzing the transcripts and pre and post DSM V surveys, all of your identifying information will be removed by Dr. Sosin. Audio tapes will be destroyed and the transcripts and surveys will be printed for analysis without any identifying information included. All printed material will be stored in a locked file cabinet owned by Dr. Sosin, and the transcripts and surveys will be stored on her password protected computer with all of your personal, identifying information removed.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study**
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship. If you choose to withdraw, you can contact Michael Trexler at mtrexler@liberty.edu. Upon withdrawal, all of the data we collected from you will be destroyed immediately.

**Contacts Information and Inquiries**
The lead researcher conducting this study is Dr. Lisa S. Sosin, PhD, LPC, LLP, BACS. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact Dr. Lisa S. Sosin at (434) 592-4042 or lssosin@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

**Disclosure**
I have read and understand the description of the study and contents of this document. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this study.
The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 3/3/2017 to 3/2/2018.
Protocol # 2794.030317

Understand that I must be 18 years or older to sign this informed consent and participate in this study. I understand that should I have any questions about this research and its conduct, I should contact one of the researchers listed above. I

☐ Please check here to indicate that you give the researcher your permission to audio-tape the debriefing session and use the debriefing survey, the transcript from your interview, your demographic information (age, gender, and ethnicity), and pre and post DSM V Level II Anxiety Survey, with your personal, identifying information removed, in our data analysis.

Signature: _________________________________ Date: ______________

Signature of Investigator: ___________________________ Date: ______________

Signature of Investigator: ___________________________ Date: ______________

Signature of Investigator: ___________________________ Date: ______________