

## Columbia University Information Sheet

### Consent Authorization

**IRB Protocol Title:** Collecting Digital Expressions of Grief Through a Custom Online Platform

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**IRB Protocol #:** AAAT3359

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**Principal Investigator:** Kathleen McKeown

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**Participation Duration:** 8 weeks

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**Anticipated number of research participants** 100

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### **Introduction**

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We are asking you to take part in a research study.

The purpose of this study is to gather data identified with distress related emotions in order to build tools which can better understand human expressions of distress. Asking participants about their feelings firsthand will allow us to minimize error in the data and take into account the emotions the original poster intended to portray in their text. The data we will collect will be helpful in allowing us to improve automatic methods of identifying emotions in text.

More broadly, we would like to use models generated from this data in order to help social workers in their assistance of communities. Automatic identification of emotions in text would allow social workers to identify distressed individuals more readily and provide assistance.

### **Procedures**

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You will go onto the website and create an account, where you will be prompted to avoid identifying information. Whenever you wish, you will be able to create postings on the site, where you will be prompted to fill out a survey in which you describe all of your emotions and any possible events associated with those emotions. These posts will be attached to your usernames. Posts will be accepted/rejected by a student social worker before being displayed publicly or privately on the site. Student social workers will moderate but will not contact you.

They will never know your identity, or the identities of other participants. As a participant, you will also be allowed to respond to public posts, and their responses will be similarly vetted.

For the purpose of this study, you will be asked to write between 7-8 postings per month over the course of 2 months.

## **Risks**

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There may be risks or discomforts if you take part in this study. These include: reading offensive, upsetting, or triggering content posted by other participants, and recollecting unpleasant memories, experiences, or emotions in the process of creating postings.

A risk of taking part in this study is the possibility of a loss of confidentiality or privacy. Confidential information we store includes usernames and hashes of passwords. Loss of privacy means having your personal information shared with someone who is not on the study team and was not supposed to see or know about your information. In the event of a leak, your password will not be compromised, as we follow proper password hashing protocols. The study team plans to protect your privacy. Their plans for keeping your information private are described in the Confidentiality section below.

## **Benefits**

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We will offer participants a community where they can find validation by reading about other peoples' emotions and experiences, and receiving attention on their own postings. Data that you contribute will help develop systems that can automatically identify online posters that are in distress. Such a system could ultimately be used to help social workers identify those in distress and respond to help them quicker. There is no direct benefit to participating aside from the above indirect benefits.

## **Compensation**

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You will not receive compensation for participation in this research.

## **Confidentiality**

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Any information collected during this study that can identify you by name will be kept discarded. We will do everything we can to keep your data secure, however, complete confidentiality cannot be promised. Despite all of our efforts, unanticipated problems, such as a stolen computer may occur, although it is highly unlikely.

Your postings will only be associated with the pseudonymous username you choose to log-in and will not be associated with your identity. The research file that records your participation in this study will be kept in an encrypted data file and only the investigator and study staff will have access to the file.

The following individuals and/or agencies will be able to look at and copy your research records:

- The investigator, social workers from Columbia School of Social Work
- Authorities from Columbia University including the Institutional Review Board ('IRB')
- The Office of Human Research Protections ('OHRP')

### **Whom do I call if I have questions or problems?**

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If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Kathleen McKeown at email # [krm8@columbia.edu](mailto:krm8@columbia.edu).

Taking part in this study is your choice. You can decide not to take part in or stop being in the study at any time for any reason. If you no longer want to participate in this research, you do not need to notify the Principal Investigator.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can contact the Institutional Review Board at 212-305-5883 or visit the website at <http://www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/irb/info.html>.

I have read this information sheet and the research study has been explained to me. ♦ I agree to be in the research study described above. A copy of this information sheet will be provided to me. By agreeing to participate, I have not given up any of the legal rights that I would have if I were not a participant in the study.