

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: FOCUS GROUP

Study title: Boundary conditions on memory updating: interaction with extent and unpredictability of stress
Investigators: Professor Amy L Milton

Introduction

You are invited to join a focus group on Friday, 8th November 2024, to share your views on research directions for our upcoming grant renewal. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why we are holding this focus group and what it entails. Please read the following information carefully. Feel free to seek advice if needed, or ask us for clarification using the contact details below.

What is your research about?

I lead the Cambridge MiND Lab (www.cammindlab.com). Our research explores how emotional memories influence behaviour and their role in mental health conditions. We work with human participants and animal models, primarily focusing on obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and PTSD. We're particularly interested in understanding how trauma memories differ from other types of memory at the behavioural, neural and molecular levels.

Why are you running a focus group?

As our current research funding ends in 2025, we are preparing a new funding application to support our research. We have several potential projects in mind, but we recognise the importance of involving individuals with lived experience of PTSD to shape our research priorities. By engaging in patient and public involvement (PPI), we aim to ensure our research addresses real-world needs effectively.

What will happen if I agree to participate?

You will be invited to join us for an in-person focus group to be held in central Cambridge from **11am-1pm on Friday 8th November**. Parking will be available on request. The group will consist of 3-6 people with lived experience of PTSD, led by myself and a facilitator, with another team member taking notes. You are welcome to bring a supportive friend or family member if you would like to do so.

The session will include a brief presentation on our research approach and discussion topics. We would like to cover:

- Your journey with PTSD (without disclosing specific details)
- Your experiences with treatments for PTSD and any challenges you have faced in engaging with treatments
- Your thoughts on potential future research directions

The session will last no longer than two hours with refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits) provided, including a comfort break.

We will take notes during the session, using only first names. These notes will be summarised into a document with anonymised contributions, shared via email for feedback. Initial notes will be destroyed once the summary is agreed upon or within two weeks of the focus group.

Are there any disadvantages, risks or discomforts that might be associated with this study?

Discussing lived experiences may be sensitive, but we will do our best to ensure a safe environment. You can take breaks or withdraw at any time.

What are the benefits of participating?

You'll receive an honorarium of £75 for your participation and reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses (up to £40 with receipts). If our funding application is successful, you may be invited to join our Lived Experience Steering Group, offering continued involvement in the project. Your input will help us design a research program more relevant to those living with PTSD.

I would like to participate. How do I apply?

Email Professor Amy Milton (alm46@cam.ac.uk) with "PTSD Focus Group" in the subject line by **10am on Wednesday, 6th November**. She'll confirm if you have a place on the focus group and provide further details by 12pm on Wednesday, 6th November. Applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis.