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## INFORMATION SHEET

(for group program participants)

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**Title:** 'Group Psychological Intervention for People with Depression and Overweight/Obesity'

### Researchers:

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### Description of the study:

This project entitled '*Group psychological intervention for people with depression and overweight/obesity*' is a trial of a newly developed group intervention program for people with both depression and overweight concerns.

### Purpose of the study:

The project aims to evaluate the effectiveness of a new group protocol which has been developed specifically to target overweight concerns in people who are experiencing depression. The majority of current approaches for weight loss and weight management

focus primarily on dieting and exercise, and while programs for depression often touch on these issues they are generally not the primary focus. Thus the newly developed program targets both problems simultaneously. The main aims are to find out if this will:

- Reduce depression
- Increase exercise and healthy eating habits
- Decrease unhealthy eating habits (such as emotional eating)
- Improve stress management
- Improve body image and self-confidence
- Result in healthy weight loss

To be clear, weight loss is not the sole or primary aim of this group program (but is likely to be a secondary outcome).

### **What will I be asked to do?**

We invite you to participate in a trial of this new program. Participation involves attending ten weekly two-hour group sessions. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Groups will include between eight and twelve participants (ten being optimal), and will be facilitated by two mental health professionals. Sessions have been designed to be highly interactive – they will involve some teaching style presentations, but will mostly be made up of discussions, group exercises, and skills practice. In addition to work conducted in session, participants are expected to practice skills out of session also, to assist with learning and development (for example, monitoring thoughts and emotions, practising relaxation, setting and carrying out goals).

Participation in this trial also involves attending several appointments with one of the researchers outside of the program itself for the purpose of assessment and evaluation. The initial appointment held before starting the program will involve a brief face-to-face interview and completion of a number of questionnaires – this appointment is expected to take between 1 and 1.5 hours. The interview component focusses on your level of current depression; the written questionnaires assess other relevant information such as your current activity and eating habits, health beliefs, sleep, self-esteem and body image. This appointment will be repeated at the end of the program, as well as well as at three and twelve months post-program, to help us determine if the new protocol is helpful.

We understand that participation in this program involves considerable time commitment on your part.

### **What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?**

Our expectation is that by completing this program you are likely to learn new skills and strategies to improve your mood, better manage stress, improve your relationship with eating and exercise, strengthen your knowledge and self-efficacy, build confidence and in general, increase both your mental and physical health. However, it is also possible that you may not benefit from being involved in this program. Your participation will nevertheless help us to develop a program that is robust and as useful as possible.

## **Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?**

Your participation in this program will be confidential to all those outside of the group itself. Ensuring the confidentiality of our participants is extremely important and we will discuss this in your initial appointment as well as in our first group session – specifically that information shared by group members will be kept private and should not be repeated outside of sessions. In terms of anonymity, this is something we cannot ensure given the group format – in fact part of your participation is getting to know other group members and building supportive relationships. However, if the data are later published, all results will be kept both anonymous (de-identified) and confidential in the analysis and write-up.

## **Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?**

This research is considered to be higher than “low risk” because it is possible that participants might experience emotional discomfort or distress while participating. Addressing issues that contribute to depression and weight struggles could be confronting and upsetting for some people. While we think this risk is unlikely, the possibility cannot be ruled out. We will aim to create a group environment that is safe, supportive and understanding. However, if you do experience emotional discomfort, there are a number of free and confidential counselling services available for you to contact, including Lifeline (13 11 14) and beyondblue – 1300 22 4636.

We also encourage you to use any supports and resources that you already have established. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with one of the researchers.

(In a mental health emergency, please contact mental health triage on 13 14 65 – this service is available 24/7)

## **How do I agree to participate?**

This is a research project and you do not have to be involved. If you do not wish to participate, you are under no obligation to do so and this will not affect your eligibility for participation in future research projects through SAHMRI or Flinders University. Also, you may withdraw from the project at any time after you have commenced.

If you agree to participate in this program, please read and sign the consent form accompanying this Information Sheet and provide this to the researcher.

## **How will I receive feedback?**

On completion of the project, a summary of the outcomes will be emailed to participants for their information, and will also be made available online at our website <http://mb.sahmri.com/>

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.**