

Letter of Invitation for Lakehead University Course Instructors

Dear Lakehead Course Instructor,

You are invited to participate in a project titled “Building an EMPOWERed Classroom: Examining the Impact of a Two-Day Virtual Workshop Among Postsecondary Course Instructors.” The project is being conducted by Delaney Johnson, a MSc Candidate in the School of Kinesiology at Lakehead University, along with her supervisor Dr. Erin Pearson, (School of Kinesiology), and committee members Dr. Kathryn Sinden (School of Kinesiology), Dr. Aislin Mushquash (Department of Psychology), and Ms. Lindsey Wachter (Student Health and Wellness).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the impact of a two session, education-based virtual workshop for postsecondary course instructors. It is being offered in collaboration with Lakehead Student Health and Wellness and focuses on sharing mental health information and strategies to support students in the classroom through resource provision. You are invited to participate because you are a faculty member/contract lecturer who teaches at Lakehead University. Those who are on sabbatical or have a teaching release are also welcome to participate. Because this workshop is virtual, you will need access to a device and stable internet connection.

What is Expected of Participants

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to attend two Zoom-based workshop sessions. Each will take approximately 60-90 minutes: the first will be held in February during reading week; the second, eight weeks later in April. You will also be encouraged to apply the resources provided in session one within your classroom during the term.

To assess the utility of the workshops, you will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires before and after each session. Variables being assessed include mental health literacy, self-efficacy to recommend mental health resources, and psychological well-being. The first survey will also ask you some demographic (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity) and employment details (e.g., campus location, time employed) questions. The second and fourth survey administration will also include a few open questions to better understand your study-related experiences. Each survey will take approximately 25-30 minutes of your time.

Following the first session you will receive access to an online resource bank that contains versatile ready-made resources that can be implemented within the classroom (e.g., pre-made slides designed by Student Health and Wellness). Halfway between the two sessions, a brief five-minute survey will be administered to explore your resource use.

Your Participation is Voluntary

It is important for you to know that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Therefore, there is no risk to your status or employment with Lakehead University. You can also choose not to participate by not attending the workshop sessions. If you choose to participate

there are no anticipated physical or psychological risks that could come to you. However, you may feel uncomfortable divulging views on mental health. All data collected will be anonymous. You are also free to skip questions you feel could serve as identifiers or you are uncomfortable with. Finally, you can withdraw at any time up to the point of data submission. A list of mental health resources is provided at the end of this letter.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Your participation in this study is completely confidential. You will be asked to create a unique identification number to protect your anonymity and questionnaire answers. Because this is a group-based program, you may know others in the group. To protect the privacy of all involved, we would ask that you please keep what happens in the group, in the group.

Benefits of Involvement

On an individual level, workshop content may increase your mental health literacy including knowledge of resources and supports available for both students and you as faculty along with heightened confidence to recommend these services. This new knowledge may also help to offset any burden you as an instructor feel with regards to assisting students in the classroom. There may also be indirect benefits to students. These might include- an increase in knowledge of mental health resources and help-seeking behaviours. On a societal level, data obtained can help to shape future programming aimed at supporting both students and instructors. Additionally, stigmatizing attitudes may be decreased, which has been shown to foster a more supportive and accepting environment.

Data Use

The information from the survey will only be for the use of the researchers listed. It is important to note that due to the type of survey software being used, we cannot absolutely guarantee the full confidentiality of your data. Survey Monkey is hosted by a server located in the USA, and the US Patriot Act permits US law enforcement officials, for the purpose of anti-terrorism investigation, to seek a court order that allows access to the personal records of any person without the person's knowledge. With your consent to participate, you acknowledge this fact. The completed survey responses will be stored on a password protected computer belonging to the student researcher and Dr. Erin Pearson for a minimum of 7 years per Lakehead University Policy.

By participating in this research, you agree that your anonymous results may be used for scientific purposes, including local presentations and publications in scientific journals. The results of the study will be reported without identifying you personally and without financial gain. You may ask for a copy of the general findings of this research after the study is complete. If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact the researcher below.

This research has been funded by a student award provided by the Centre for Applied Health Research at St. Joseph's Care Group. The researchers declare there are no conflicts of interest relating to the conduct of this research. This project has been approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions related to the ethics of the research and would like to speak to someone outside of the research team, please contact Sue Wright at the Research Ethics Board at research@lakeheadu.ca.

If you have questions, please contact Delaney Johnson via email to discuss (dljohnso@lakeheadu.ca). Otherwise, please review the following to proceed

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

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Below is the contact information for community-based health resources;

White Cedar Health
Care Centre
807-475-4357

Northwest Community Health
Centre - Urgent Care Clinic
807-622-8235

Thunder Bay
Counselling Centre
807-684-1880

North West LHIN, 975 Alloy Drive, Suite 201, (807) 684-9425, northwestlhin.on.ca

The North West LHIN provides community care services, which were formerly provided through Community Care Access Centre. The LHIN is responsible for planning, integrating, and funding local health care while also delivering and coordinating home and community care services. They may be able to fill an unmet service need or recommend other available services.