

## Public involvement in suicide prevention II: The Stranger on the Bridge

Thank you for showing an interest in this research study. This information sheet is designed to answer any questions you may have and to help you decide whether or not you should take part. Please read it carefully and contact us if you need any further information before making a decision.

### *What is the aim of the study?*

*The Stranger on the Bridge* was the title of an award-winning documentary, broadcast on Channel 4 in 2015. It told the story of Jonny Benjamin, who was intending to take his own life in a public place and was prevented from doing so by a passer-by.



Many suicides take place in public locations. Members of the public have a vital role to play in preventing these deaths, but few people know how to recognise a mental health emergency or are willing to get involved. We want to increase the number of people who are able to recognise and reach out to someone in a public place who may be contemplating suicide. In this study we are working in partnership with Jonny and a number of suicide prevention charities to develop a set of evidence-based education and training resources. The study has been funded by the Medical Research Council.

### *Who can take part in the study?*

We are looking for people who been involved in a situation similar to Jonny's to help us understand what it was like. We would like to hear from you if you are **aged 18 or over** and fall into one of the following groups:

- i) You have personal experience of attempting or seriously considering taking your own life **in a public location** and you **were prevented** from doing so **by a stranger**.
- ii) You have personal experience of **trying to prevent** someone you didn't know (**a stranger**) from taking their own life **in a public location**.

The type of location doesn't matter (it doesn't need to have been a bridge), as long as it was a public place, as opposed to your own or somebody else's home.

If you are in doubt about whether your experience fits, please get in touch with us. We will be happy to talk it through with you and will tell you whether we can include you in the study.

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

First of all, one of our experienced researchers will contact you to discuss the study in more detail and answer any questions you may have. They will ask you a bit about yourself and your experience, to help us and you decide whether or not you should take part.

If you then decide you would like to do so, the researcher will arrange a time to meet you and conduct an interview. The interview will be in a place that is convenient for you. It could be in your own home or another suitable location. The interview is likely to take between 1 and 2 hours, depending on your experiences. You can have someone with you for support if you like.

During the interview you will be invited to talk freely about your experience and will also be asked some questions about it. The questions are not all set in advance and will depend on the way the interview develops, so it will feel much like a conversation.

You will be allowed to talk at your own pace and you will not be made to disclose anything you don't want to. You will be free to stop the interview and leave at any time without giving a reason.

At the end of the interview we will give you a £10 Amazon voucher (or equivalent) in recognition of your time and effort. If you have to travel to the interview, please obtain a receipt for any tickets you buy and we will reimburse your expenses.

### ***What will happen to the information I provide?***

All the information we collect will be stored securely and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The only people who will have access to it will be members of the research team, who are bound by a duty of confidentiality.

With your consent, the researcher will record the interview so they can give you their full attention and do not have to write everything down while you are talking. Afterwards the recording will be typed up in full, but we will be careful to remove or change all names of people and places and any other details that might enable you to be identified. Any quotations we use when writing up the results of the study will be anonymous.



When we have completed all the interviews and analysed the findings, we will be organising some meetings and working with suicide prevention charities and other stakeholders to develop the educational materials. We will contact you again and invite you to help with this, but you do not have to do so. We will also send you a summary of the findings if you wish.

### ***What are the risks involved in taking part?***

We recognise that recalling and reflecting on your experience may be very painful for you. It may trigger flashbacks or thoughts of harming yourself and may make you feel unsafe. The researcher will be sensitive to your mood throughout the interview. They will stop the interview if they judge that it is proving harmful to you, and will discuss with you how to keep you safe. They will also give you details of some organisations you can contact for support if you become distressed or feel unsafe later.

**You should not take part if you are currently thinking of harming yourself.** If you are receiving psychiatric care, you should show this information sheet to your psychiatrist or mental health worker and talk to them about it before making a decision. If you do decide to take part, you should ask them to write a letter saying that you are well enough to do so.



***Are there any benefits?***

You possess rare insight into this issue. By sharing your experience with us you will be helping us to develop educational resources that are based on the best available evidence. We hope this will help to prevent some future suicides and create a safer society for everybody, and that you will find taking part rewarding.

***What if I wish to make a complaint?***

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Exeter Medical School Research Ethics Committee. UEMS REC REFERENCE NUMBER: May17/B/117. If you have any complaints about the way in which the study is being conducted please contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Dr Ruth Garside, via email: [uemsethics@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:uemsethics@exeter.ac.uk)

***Who do I contact if I want more information or if I wish to take part?***

Please email us at [PUBLIS@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:PUBLIS@exeter.ac.uk) or call either of the researchers below:

**Dr Jane Derges**

**Tel:** 01392 726005 or 07732 043498

**Professor Christabel Owens**

**Tel:** 01392 726006

University of Exeter Medical School, College House, St Luke's Campus, Exeter EX1 2LU

***Thank you for taking time to read this information***