

## Participant Information sheet

### Using a Q Methodology Approach to Explore and Prioritise Multicultural Counsellor Competencies

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**Supervisor:** Dr. Shun Chen

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take some time to read the following information carefully, and please retain this copy for your personal records. Please ask if anything requires further clarification.

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

The UK is a culturally nation, and those reported as ethnic minorities are experiencing an increased need for counselling. However, ethnic minority individuals face many barriers when accessing counselling services. Culture plays a large role in our society and shapes our values, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. If a counsellor is able to understand their client through their cultural lens, it can allow for a stronger therapeutic alliance and more positive therapeutic outcomes. Therefore, it is important that counsellors are able to counsel individuals from cultural backgrounds. However, it has been found that counsellors may have limited knowledge and experience about how to counsel these clients effectively due to a lack of multicultural training throughout their counselling careers.

The purpose of this study is to explore counsellors' perceived importance of multicultural competencies. Sue et al. (1992) outline specific multicultural competencies that are suggested to be necessary for counsellors to counsel culturally diverse clients and, in turn, be multiculturally competent. The study will aim to explore these multicultural counselling competencies and determine their perceived importance by counsellors.

The study aims to identify and prioritise key multicultural competencies to direct future learning. Furthermore, the study will provide a greater understanding of multicultural competence and will be gained by seeking the views and opinions of experienced counsellors. This will also guide further work to improve their multicultural competence learning experiences.

#### **Why have I been invited to take part?**

You have been selected to participate in this experiment due to your knowledge and experience of counselling.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. This participant information sheet has been produced to help you decide if you would like to take part in this study. It is up to you (and you alone) to decide whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and with no detriment to you. However, after this point, it may not be possible to

delete existing information about you where it is already being processed or published as part of the research data and removing the information would affect the integrity of the research already undertaken.

### **How do I give my consent to participate in the study?**

It is important that you give your informed consent if you decide to take part in this study. After reading the participant information sheet, you can decide whether you are willing to participate in this study. If so, then you will complete a consent form before you start the study.

### **What does taking part involve?**

This study is divided into two parts: the Pre-Sort and the Final Sort. Firstly, you will be asked to look at a series of multicultural competency statements using Q Method Software (no specialised knowledge about the software is required). Once you have had the opportunity to read the statements, you will be asked to pre-sort the statements into three categories: essential, critical, and imperative. After you have sorted these statements, you will be asked to place them in a grid where you will order them based on your perceptions of importance. Your pre-sort will help you with this, as you will already have a relative view of the importance of the competencies. Once you have placed all the statements into the grid, the study will end, and you will be thanked for your participation. You will be asked a few general demographic questions, but no identifiable data will be collected.

### **Are there any risks associated with taking part?**

This study is not expected to pose any risk or harm to participants. Sorting the multicultural competencies is not intended to cause any harm or distress, but participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **Are there any benefits associated with taking part?**

Completing this study will give you the opportunity to reflect on multicultural competence in the context of your personal training and practice. This study hopes to address the gap in the literature regarding the prioritisation of multicultural competencies. Furthermore, through analysis of results and establishing importance levels of competencies, recommendations for future training and learning can be identified.

### **What will happen to my data?**

Once you have completed the study, your anonymised data will be stored in research-specific drives on secure servers of the University of Aberdeen and will only be accessed or transported by encrypted and password-protected devices. It will be retained in accordance with the University of Aberdeen Research Data Management Policy. Only the researcher and their supervisor will have access to the data. Data and information will not be shared with other researchers or organisations. After the project end date, data will be permanently deleted in accordance with University IT data security procedures. You can also consult the University's Privacy Notice for Research Participants for further information on how we manage your data - <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/privacy/research-participants-938.php>

### **Will my participation be confidential?**

The data you provide will be analysed and may be used in publications and other scholarly means of disseminating the findings from the research project, but this will be done in such a way that your identity is not disclosed.

### **How will I find out about the results of the study?**

Unfortunately, because the study is conducted online and all participant information is anonymous, participants cannot receive the results.

**Who is funding and/or sponsoring the study?**

The study does not receive external funding or sponsorship. The researcher will cover necessary expenses such as their own travel and software.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This research has been approved by the Department of Mental Health and Well-being, University of Aberdeen

**Contact Details**

If you have any general queries, require further information about the study or would like to withdraw your consent to participate, please contact the principal researcher:

**Name: Zara Purdy**

**E-mail:** [t01zp23@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:t01zp23@abdn.ac.uk)

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you can contact the Head of the Department Professor Kate Smith, at [kate.smith@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:kate.smith@abdn.ac.uk).

**Thank you for considering taking part in this study.**