APPENDIX C

TSP PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT
Welcome to the Tell Someone Project (TSP) on trauma, violence, sexual abuse, & identity.

Thank you for visiting our website. By participating in this research, you are making a valuable contribution. We, the researchers, appreciate your input, and thank you for sharing your experiences and thoughts. Doing so will help to create a better understanding of these important issues. We understand that many of the questions we are asking you are very personal. We have been very careful to ensure that your complete anonymity and confidentiality is protected. We will not ask you for any details that would allow us to identify you in any way. We hope that this will help you to feel comfortable to answer the questions honestly.

Invitation to Participate in a Research Project

Project Information Statement (Plain Language Statement)

Primary Investigator:
Andrea Stewart (Psychology Ph D candidate, BA, Grad Dip Applied Psych)

Supervising Investigator:
Dr. David Smith (BBSc, Mpsych, PhD, MAPS, MASH, Senior Lecturer, RMIT University)
Telephone: (03) 9925 7523 or E-mail: david.smith@rmit.edu.au

If you are aged 16 years or older, you are invited to participate in this research project. This information section describes the project in straightforward language, or 'plain English'. Please read this section carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please contact one of the investigators. Following the instructions at the bottom of this page will enable you to access the survey.

Who is involved in this research project?
Andrea Stewart is conducting research examining trauma, violence, sexual abuse, and identity, as part of her doctoral thesis, in the School of Health Sciences at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr David Smith, and has received the approval of the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee.

What is the project about? Why is it being conducted? Why me?
The project examines issues such as depression, conflict, domestic violence, and unwanted sexual experiences in childhood and adulthood - issues that constitute major problems in our community. In order to reduce such problems, better understanding is needed of how people from diverse communities may differ in their experiences of positive and negative life events. We are a small team of researchers committed to dispelling myths, and creating better understanding of, and services for individuals from diverse communities. If you feel strongly about the levels of depression, conflict, and domestic and sexual violence in your community, and are willing to give between 1 and 2 hours of your time, to complete this survey (in private), you will be making a valuable contribution to research examining mental health and trauma experiences. A principal policy underpinning this research is to be inclusive of marginalised groups, traditionally under-represented in research studies, in order to reduce the invisibility and silencing of issues confronting marginalised populations.
Are you heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, none of the above, confused, happy, or depressed? If you answered YES to any of these, you are able to make a unique contribution to this research. We are seeking to raise understanding of the experiences of a large number of males and females of all sexual orientations, and are dedicated to representing the voices of diverse communities in our research findings. We need both people that have experienced trauma, and those who have not (to form control groups). If you would like to contribute an opinion, whether or not you have experienced an unwanted sexual event, domestic violence, or harassment, or know someone who has, your input would be highly valued. As we are seeking a large number of participants, letting other people know about this research would also be most helpful, and much appreciated.

Speaking out takes courage but silence and invisibility allows such problems to continue. Your voice (and the voices of others) can make an important difference. Claim your right to speak out.

What are the benefits associated with participation?
Although your participation will not result in any immediate, direct benefit to you, it will contribute to current understanding of a range of serious problems across diverse social groups, providing information that can be used to effect positive changes in community attitudes, service provision, policies, and legislation.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey (consisting of 9 sections, listed below). Some sections contain many personal questions, however, great care has been taken to protect your anonymity and confidentiality. If, on viewing the survey questions, you do not wish to participate, you may simply exit the website. If you prefer not to answer certain questions, you have the right to omit those questions, or to simply discontinue. Your answers cannot be recorded until you have clicked the CONTINUE buttons at the end of each page. However, once these buttons have been clicked, your answers can no longer be withdrawn, as they cannot be identified as yours. Section 10 provides you with referral details and information about where to obtain assistance if required. This section can be printed and retained for your use, and does not contain any questions.

Do I have to write a lot?
Absolutely not! Most of the questions are answered by merely clicking on a button. Sometimes you are asked for additional information, depending on your response, but long answers are not required. You do have the option to make additional comments if you wish.

What if I can't finish the survey in one session?
That's fine. You can complete the survey over several sessions if you like. As long as you use the same code name, you can re-enter the survey and continue from where you left off last time, as often as you like. The sections are submitted as you complete each one, so each piece makes a valuable contribution. (Please note: If you exit a section without clicking CONTINUE, the data from that section will be lost.)

How long will it take me to complete?
That's difficult to answer. This is a long questionnaire, because there are so many important things we would like to ask you. But the time it takes to complete will vary quite a lot depending on what life events you have experienced. Not all sections will apply to you. If they do not apply, you will be asked to SKIP to the next section. If you have many skips, you will progress relatively quickly through the questionnaire and might expect to complete the questionnaire in as little as 30 minutes. However, if most sections apply to you, it will take considerably longer. For example, if you are a victim/survivor of childhood sexual abuse, and also a victim/survivor of unwanted sexual events in adulthood, or if you have experienced other traumatic events, you will have considerably more to report than if none of these have happened to you. Some people may require several hours to complete the questionnaire. If this is your experience, you are able to complete the survey in sections. In other words, you can exit and re-enter at a later time to complete the survey, as long as you have remembered your code name. Your story is very important to us, and we appreciate your perseverance. We hope that you will complete the survey, and encourage you to take breaks as you need. You are welcome to add any comments/information or clarification at selected points in the questionnaire.

What are the risks associated with participation?
Many of the questions in the Tell Someone Project survey are very personal and focus on sensitive issues. Answering some questions may be difficult for you, and it is possible that you may feel uncomfortable or distressed as a result of your participation. It is important for you to be aware that the survey includes questions of a highly intimate, sexual, and private nature. These questions are presented in a direct manner. If you feel that you may become unduly confronted, embarrassed or discomfited by such material, then you should not participate in the research. You are welcome to examine all of the survey materials before making your decision as to whether you will participate.
If you are unduly concerned about any of your responses or feel distressed upon participation in the project, you should contact Andrea Stewart (Primary Investigator) or Dr David Smith (Supervising Investigator) using the contact details provided, as soon as convenient. Andrea Stewart or Dr Smith will sensitively and confidentially discuss any issues arising from participation, and suggest appropriate follow-up, if necessary. If you would like, Ms Stewart or Dr Smith are able to arrange a referral to a service specialising in relevant issues (e.g., trauma counselling, domestic violence services, gay/lesbian services). Alternatively, you are encouraged to make contact with relevant agencies to obtain assistance. You are able to access a range of confidential services (including 24 hour counselling, and other telephone, personal, and online services) via the contact details provided in Section 10 (or go to SUPPORT SERVICES). All telephone services are anonymous, and calls to 1800 numbers do not appear on a telephone bill.

If you would like to provide feedback about the survey, you can do so by emailing tellsomeone@rmit.edu.au. If you have an ethical issue or complaint about the survey, you can contact the Secretary, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, University Secretariat, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 9925 1745. Details of the complaints procedure are available from the above address.

What will happen to the information I provide?

Given the sensitive nature of this topic, every care has been taken to safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality of your responses. To preserve your anonymity, we ask you NOT to place your name, or any identifying information anywhere on the survey. Please note that in cases where specific information relating to activities that are dangerous to the public is supplied, the researchers would be obliged to notify appropriate authorities. It is therefore important that you do not provide your name, or the name of anybody else to the researchers. Your contact details have not been obtained, nor will they be, at any point. Your email address will be automatically deleted before access to your data is possible. Thus, none of the information you provide can in any way be linked back to you. Upon submission, your responses will be entered electronically into a group database, from which only group data will be reported or published. This database is password protected and managed within the guidelines applicable to the secure storage of all electronic data within RMIT University. Only the primary and supervising investigators will have access to this group data. In accordance with Human Research Ethics Committee guidelines, group data will be securely retained for a minimum of five years after publication, and then destroyed.

Research data will be collated and analysed in a student report, and research findings may be disseminated in edited publications, through conference presentations or media release, and utilised in the development of educational or prevention-based programs. Only group data will be used for research purposes and in any future research publication. Individual responses will not be reported at any point. You are welcome to view the results of the research, which will be available in December 2006, at http://weblearn.rmit.edu.au/tellsomeone/welcome.htm

Because of the nature of the data collection, we are not able to obtain written informed consent from you. Instead, we assume that you have given consent by your voluntary access of this website, and your completion and submission of the survey.

What are my rights as a participant?

You have the right to withdraw your participation at any time, without prejudice, and the right to have any questions answered at any time. If you choose to discontinue the survey, simply stop filling in your answers, and do not click the CONTINUE buttons at the end of each page, and the SUBMIT button at the end of the survey. Clicking these buttons sends your responses to the researchers (in sections), and no responses can be seen by the researchers until a button has been clicked. Once a button has been clicked, your responses have been submitted into the database, your information cannot be identified, and therefore cannot be withdrawn.

Who should I contact if I have any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research, you may discuss these confidentially with the primary investigator, Andrea Stewart (telephone: (03) 9925 7646 or email: tellsomeone@rmit.edu.au) or the supervising investigator, Dr. David Smith (telephone: (03) 9925 7523 or e-mail: david.smith@rmit.edu.au). You are welcome to call anonymously or to use a fictional name.

What will I be asked about?

The questionnaire is divided into 10 sections as follows:

Section 1 - Stressful life events
Section 2 - Unwanted sexual experiences in childhood
Section 3 - Unwanted sexual events in adulthood
Section 4 - Distress since the sexual assault
Section 5 - Your thoughts, feelings, and health
Section 6 - Sexual orientation & gender identity
Section 7 - Harassment, discrimination, & crimes against you (specific to sexual orientation/gender identity)
Section 8 - Harassment, discrimination, & crimes against you (other)
Section 9 - Demographics & the end.
Section 10 – Support services, information, and referral details for you to keep
What if some sections don’t apply to me? How will I know which sections to complete?
Please START EVERY SECTION, then follow the instructions to know where to SKIP. By reading all instructions carefully, you will know what to do. Often you will be asked a YES/NO question, and then you will be instructed to proceed or SKIP, depending on whether you ticked yes or no. Please DO NOT OMIT any section unless you have been instructed to skip.
Instead, just follow the prompts, and remember, if you are not sure, just give us a call. We are here to help. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NO QUESTIONS ARE LEFT BLANK, EXCEPT FOR THOSE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SKIP.

What if I don’t understand the instructions or the questions?
You are most welcome to ring (anonymously) for advice on how to complete the questionnaire or with any other questions you may have. Please call Andrea Stewart (principal researcher) on (03) 9925 7646, or email her on tellsomeone@rmit.edu.au. Feel free to use a fictional name.

How do I get started?
You can access the Tell Someone Project survey by clicking on the CONSENT button below, labelled “I Agree”. In order to complete the Tell Someone Project survey, you will need to indicate your consent to participate in the research. Then you will be directed to the questionnaire. Please read each of the statements below, and tick each box by clicking your mouse in the box if you agree with the statement.

I acknowledge that:

1. □ I have read the statements above, explaining the survey involved in this project
2. □ I consent to participate in the survey titled the Tell Someone Project (TSP), the particulars of which I have read about
3. □ I am aware that the project is for the purpose of research and may not be of direct benefit to me
4. □ I understand that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law
5. □ I am aware that the security of the data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data of the study may be published, and a report of project outcomes will be provided to the School of Health Sciences (Division of Psychology), RMIT University. Any information which will identify me will not be used.
6. □ I understand that the group data collected during the study may be published
7. □ I am aware that I will not be able to be identified from my responses
8. □ I am 16 years of age or older

If you have ticked each box, and wish to proceed, please click on the CONSENT button below, labelled "I AGREE". Your browser will then be directed to the survey. Please remember not to put your name, or the name of anybody else, on this questionnaire.

If you would like to keep a copy of the plain language statement (opens new window) you can save it as a PDF for your records.

Note: Adobe Acrobat Reader (opens new window) is required to view PDF files. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat, you will need to download and install it.

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Secretary, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, University Secretariat, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 9925 1745. Details of the complaints procedure are available from this address.
APPENDIX E

SELECTED TSP PUBLICITY
MATERIALS AND MEDIA EXCERPTS
Online survey volunteers urgently needed

the Tellsomeone Project

Want to **DO SOMETHING POSITIVE** about depression, domestic & sexual abuse, suicide & identity, in your community?

Silence & invisibility allows many problems to continue....

Completing an **ANONYMOUS** online survey allows **YOUR** voice to make an important difference – **EVERYONE** over 16 can participate

Claim **YOUR** right to speak out

The Tellsomeone research team @ RMIT University is committed to dispelling myths, & creating better understanding of, & services for diverse & marginalised communities – traditionally left out or under-represented in research. For details, contact Andrea or David (anonymously) at tellsomeone@rmit.edu.au or on 9925 7646, or ACCESS THE SURVEY via:

**http://weblearn.rmit.edu.au/tellsomeone**

(or just google: Tellsomeone Project)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST
Online research – survey participants needed

the Tellsomeone Project

Concerned about trauma, domestic & sexual abuse, mental health & identity, in your community?

You’re invited to DO SOMETHING positive, by completing an ANONYMOUS online survey.

Silence & invisibility allows many problems to continue....

Your voice can make an important difference - CLAIM your RIGHT to SPEAK OUT

The Tellsomeone research team @ RMIT University is committed to dispelling myths, & creating better understanding of, & services for diverse & marginalised communities – traditionally left out or under-represented in research. To find out more, contact Andrea or David (anonymously) at tellsomeone@rmit.edu.au or on 9925 7646, or ACCESS THE SURVEY via:

http://weblearn.rmit.edu.au/tellsomeone/

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST
The Tellsomeone Project (TSP)

Do you feel strongly about the level of depression, violence, & abuse in your community?

Want to help find solutions?

You are invited to DO SOMETHING positive about it by completing an ANONYMOUS online survey on trauma, domestic & sexual abuse, mental health & identity.

Do you feel strongly about the level of depression, violence, & abuse in your community?

You are invited to DO SOMETHING positive about it by completing an ANONYMOUS online survey on trauma, domestic & sexual abuse, mental health & identity.

Are you interested?

DEPRESSED? HAPPY? MISUNDERSTOOD?

Afflicted by SEXUAL ABUSE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, CRIME, or other TRAUMA?

Straight?

Gay? Lesbian? Bisexual?

Transgender? Intersex?

Left out? Marginalized? Misunderstood?

If you answered YES, or MAYBE to any of the above, WE NEED YOU for this important Australia-wide research. We are a small team of dedicated researchers at RMIT Psychology, committed to dispelling myths & creating better understanding of & services for diverse & marginalised communities – traditionally under-represented in research studies.

Many survivors of domestic & sexual abuse suffer in silence. Silence & invisibility allow many problems to continue. It can be difficult, but if you choose to speak out, YOUR VOICE CAN MAKE AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE. You have a right to be heard, a right to maintain your full anonymity, & a right to tell your story without having to fear that you don’t conform to the right stereotypes. By completing an online survey, you maintain total anonymity (we never meet you or ask your name, & we cannot identify you in any way) & yet you are making a very important contribution.

Violence & sexual abuse affects everyone in our community. EVERYONE over 18 is eligible to complete the survey, & you are warmly invited to do so. We need large numbers of females & males of all sexual orientations – both people who have experienced trauma, & those who have not (to form control groups). You can also help by letting other people know about this survey – in fact, we’d really appreciate that!

You are welcome to contact Andrea or Caira (project coordinators) of tellsomeone@rmit.edu.au or call (3) 9922 7240 to find out more or ACCESS THE ONLINE SURVEY by going to:

http://weblearn.rmit.edu.au/tellsomeone/

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST.
LATEST NEWS

RMIT Tellsomeone Project calls for volunteers

An RMIT University researcher is calling for 5,000 volunteers to contribute to an online survey to try to find out what is that’s causing an epidemic of depression, suicide, trauma, and domestic and sexual abuse in our community. [Full story]
RMIT Telsomeone Project calls for help to break walls of silence

RMIT University researcher Andrea Stewart is calling for 5,000 volunteers across Australia to complete an online survey that will be used to help individuals and communities affected by depression, suicide, trauma, and domestic and sexual abuse.

Ms Stewart, a clinical and forensic psychology researcher, said that the silence and "invisibility" surrounding issues such as abuse, mental health and suicide often enables the problem to continue.

"Sexual and domestic violence, depression, and suicide issues that touch many Australians, yet often remain hidden and subject to taboos and stigma," Ms Stewart said.

"More than 80 percent of sexual assaults are not reported and those that are, tend to be assaults by strangers."

"However, we know that most assaults are carried out by a person known to the victim, and often by someone close to them, and that these types of assaults are the least likely to be reported."

"Similarly, most cases of domestic violence remain hidden, and whilst problems are not fully understood, they remain difficult to address."

Ms Stewart said that in recent years, suicide has been the leading external (accidents and injury) cause of death in Australia, claiming more lives than transport accidents.
"However, we know that most assaults are carried out by a person known to the victim, and often by someone close to them, and that these types of assaults are the least likely to be reported."

"Similarly, most cases of domestic violence remain hidden, and whilst problems are not fully understood, they remain difficult to address."

Ms Stewart said that in recent years, suicide has been the leading external (accidents and injury) cause of death in Australia, claiming more lives than transport accidents.

"In males aged between 15 and 34 years, at least 20 per cent of total deaths were attributed to suicide."

"For females within this age range, suicide accounted for 11 to 17 per cent of total deaths. Marginalised, isolated, and rural communities face additional risk factors and are over-represented in these figures," Ms Stewart said.

Ms Stewart said the Tellsomeone Project urgently needed volunteers from all backgrounds to complete the anonymous survey. Anyone 16 years or older can participate.

"It is an opportunity for individuals to do something positive and practical about serious social problems, irrespective of their own circumstances," Ms Stewart said.

"We need people who haven’t experienced any trauma just as much as we need those that have, so that we can make comparisons.

"Better information and holistic research is needed in order to better serve those at risk and the community in general. Individuals within marginalised populations often face additional challenges that can place them at higher risk.

"By dispelling myths and creating better understanding of diverse and isolated communities, we can identify important strategies for helping."

To participate in the Tellsomeone Project online survey, please visit Tellsomeone online.
The 'Tell Someone' Project

Domestic and sexual violence, suicide and mental illness, are pervasive problems. Subject to enormous taboos, notoriously invisible or underrepresented in victim of crime, police and health statistics, their invisibility allows them to continue. For change to come about, there firstly needs to be an awareness that a problem exists. Silence, stigma and taboos not only make it very difficult for a person to come forward, but also for those around them to be able to help or even pick up the warning signs, often allowing the abuse to continue or depression to worsen.

RMIT University is calling for 5000 volunteers to contribute to an online survey, to try to find out what it is that's causing an epidemic of depression, suicide, trauma, and domestic and sexual abuse in our community. Cartoon: Andrea Stewart

RMIT University is now calling for 5000 volunteers to contribute to a survey online, to try to find out what it is that's causing an epidemic of depression, suicide, trauma, and domestic and sexual abuse in our community.

Heard for the invitation to also reach people in remote and rural regions of Australia, Clinical and Forensic Psychology Researcher, Andrea Stewart, joined 774's Jon Faine, calling for volunteers for the Tell Someone project. "We'd like to find out what makes it so debilitating for some people and what fastest enable others to move on," she said. "What are the circumstances that differentiate some victims' experience from others?"

This research can help to identify ways in which we can better assist, not only victims, but also perpetrators, so that we can work towards treatment and prevention in more
constructive ways. We need to know how to create a climate that's more conducive to reporting and to better serve the needs of the community, because everyone is affected by these issues.”

The research examines experiences and impact of traumatic life events—specifically, sexual abuse in childhood and adulthood, domestic violence, depression and suicide, and how the impact of such experiences varies across different settings and factors in a person’s life. How, for example, impact might vary according to gender and the circumstances surrounding an event, and how a person thinks and processes events in their lives.

Age is the only criterion for inclusion and anyone over 16 is able to make a contribution to this research. Andrea emphasises that she is not only looking for people who have experienced trauma themselves, but also for people who haven’t experienced any trauma, so that meaningful comparisons can be made. It is an opportunity for people to do something positive and constructive about some serious social problems.

But just how personal and intrusive is this online survey? “These questions are intensely personal and they are very sensitive issues. That’s why we thought it was important to create an online format, because that’s a very private and a very safe environment and format for people to use,” says Andrea. “Many people suffer in silence, but whilst problems remain hidden, they remain difficult to properly understand and address. By dispelling myths and creating better understanding, we can identify important strategies for helping. The online format allows individuals to tell their story whilst retaining their privacy and dignity. It’s non-invasive, but, nevertheless, provides us with a holistic understanding of the person’s circumstances and well-being. It’s completely confidential and anonymous.”

But anonymity can affect its reliability. Andrea is aware of this and explains: “It’s not a short survey and it’s not an easy survey, and so I think there has to be a level of commitment. If you’re not serious about wanting to contribute something, you’ll probably get sick of it after a couple of minutes. So I think we factored that in. We also know that it’s easier for people to respond openly and honestly if they don’t have to fear negative evaluation.”

The survey will be available online for at least six months at the link below.

To make a comment, participate in our Message Board by adding your comment.

Related Links:
Some of these links may be sites outside the ABC and as such the ABC has no editorial control over such sites.

The ‘Tell Someone’ Project

Last Updated: 9/02/2008 2:43:00 PM AEDT
The Tellsomeone Project: On-line Survey

RMIT University is calling for volunteers to complete an anonymous on-line survey that will be used as a basis to help individuals and communities affected by depression, suicide, trauma, domestic violence and sexual assault in Australia. The Tellsomeone Project urgently needs 5000 volunteers, who are 16 years or older, from all backgrounds to participate in this important Australia-wide research.

The principal researcher, Andrea Stewart, believes the research will provide “an opportunity for individuals to do something positive and practical about serious social problems, irrespective of their own circumstances”. The researchers are calling on women and men of all sexual orientations to complete the on-line survey. They are keen for both those who have experienced trauma and those who have not had traumatic experiences to participate, and would like as many people as possible to be informed about the survey.

Key messages for participants are that:
- Violence and sexual abuse affects everyone in the community
- Everyone over 16 years is invited to participate
- The on-line survey guarantees total anonymity
- Silence & invisibility allows many problems to continue
- You can help by telling others about this survey

The survey has been sensitively designed with easy-to-follow instructions for participants to read before deciding whether to participate. The purpose of the research is clearly outlined and participants are given a range of options for making it easier for them to complete. There are also links to relevant support services across Australia.

To find out more, contact Andrea or David (anonymously) at tellsomeone@mit.edu.au or on (03) 9925 7646.
To access more information about, or complete the survey, go to: http://web2mit.mit.edu.au/tellsomeone/
Research participation

Do you feel strongly about the level of depression, violence, and abuse in your community? Want to help find solutions? The Division of Psychology at RMIT University is undertaking an online research project about depression, domestic our sexual violence, and trauma in our community.

A small team of dedicated researchers at RMIT Psychology are committed to dispelling myths and creating better understanding of, and services for, diverse and marginalised communities - traditionally under-represented in research studies.

Many survivors of domestic & sexual abuse suffer in silence. Silence and invisibility allows many problems to continue. It can be difficult, but if you choose to speak out, your voice can make an important contribution. You have a right to be heard, a right to maintain your full anonymity and a right to tell your story without having to fear that you don't conform to the 'right' stereotypes. By completing an online survey, you maintain total anonymity (we never meet you or ask your name and we cannot identify you in any way) and yet you are making a very important contribution.

Violence and sexual abuse affects everyone in our community. Everyone over 16 is eligible to complete the survey, and you are warmly invited to do so.

We need large numbers of females and males of all sexual orientations - both people who have