

Human Research Ethics

Principal Participant Information Statement



Food and Nutrition Wellbeing Study

School staff pilot of online modules to encourage healthy habits

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Project Chief Investigator

Laureate Professor Clare Collins

School of Health Sciences
College of Health, Medicine, and Wellbeing
University of Newcastle
ATC Building, Ring Road
University Drive,
Callaghan, NSW 2308

Dear Principal,

You are invited to participate in the research project identified above which is being conducted by Laureate Professor Clare Collins, Dr Vanessa Shrewsbury, and Miss Tammie Jakstas from the School of Health Science, along with Dr Andrew Miller from the School of Education and Professor Tamara Bucher from the Berner Fachhochschule, Bern, Switzerland.

Funding support is currently being provided for the project by The Teachers' Health Foundation with the collective experience of the research team including nutrition, health and wellbeing, education implementation and evaluation.

Why is the research being done?

The purpose of the research is to test the benefit and ability of the online modules to support and potentially improve individual teacher food and nutrition practices as they relate to overall wellbeing. Specific observations will be made regarding the benefit of providing access to all school staff, with developments to school eating social norms and individual participant eating, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Who can participate in the research?

- Independent schools within NSW are sought to participate.
- Participation in this research is open to any teacher and staff at your school.
- *Note: school staff includes: all teaching staff, administration personnel, learning support staff, library staff, maintenance, counsellors/psychologists or information technology support staff.*

What does participation involve?

If you agree to participate, your staff will be invited to complete an online survey about their food and nutrition practices alongside key measures of well-being, prior to being provided access to three online

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modules to encourage positive behaviour changes to enhance food and nutrition practices that support teacher wellbeing.

Access to the modules will be given sequentially, with access to all modules closing following program completion, with a follow up survey provided at the close of the program and at three months to check in with teacher progress and collect teacher feedback on the course content and impressions of its usefulness to them. Teacher and school staff participation is entirely voluntary.

To help facilitate completion of the modules and follow up surveys you are asked to:

- Arrange for a 15-minute spot within a school staff meeting to introduce teachers and staff to this program opportunity.
- Arrange for your school office to distribute our teacher/school staff invitation email to your staff. The email will provide a brief explanation of the research and contain a link to the Participation Information Statement and recruitment survey.
- Provide participating teachers and staff with up to three (15-20 minute) personal time slots across the four-month duration of the study to complete at least one session from each of the three modules (preferably at/ or before a staff meeting) *~Optional*.
- To meet complete a pre/post principal questionnaire.

What choice do you have?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice and that of your staff. Whether or not you consent for your school to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you. If you do decide to participate, your staff can withdraw from the research at any time. They can also withdraw any data they have provided up until the questionnaire and education data is de-identified and aggregated, by emailing tammie.jakstas@uon.edu.au

How much time will it take?

The figure on the following page outlines the teacher/staff and principal requirements for all elements of the study and completion of the online modules and follow up questionnaires.

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Whole of staff presentation & project overview

All school staff: Attend 15-minute presentation within a regular staff meeting.
Principals: Complete an initial school questionnaire.

Baseline measures (20-30 minutes)

Teachers/staff to complete the TFNQ

Module 1 (3x20 mins individual sessions)

- **S1:** Your diet & mental health (Incl. the HEQ)
- **S2:** Why 5 serves are a good start!
- **S3:** Variety, why does it matter?

Encouragement prompts sent.

Emails sent with healthy tips & encouragement relevant to module 1.
Additional school reminder to be sent by school administration team.

Module 2 Using cooking to boost health & wellbeing

S1-3: 3x20 mins individual sessions

Encouragement prompts sent.

Emails sent with healthy tips & encouragement relevant to module 2.
Additional school reminder to be sent by school administration team.

Module 3 Taking time to eat, shared meals & the school environment

S1-3: 3x20 mins individual sessions

Encouragement prompts sent.

Emails sent with healthy tips & encouragement relevant to module 3.
Additional school reminder to be sent by school administration team.

Follow up (~30 minutes)

Teachers/staff to complete:

- The post-program evaluation & TFNQ
- A 3-month prompt sent to teachers/staffs to re-complete the HEQ & receive a personalised report/update on their diet quality post module completion
- At 3 months follow up a third and final TFNQ will be issued for completion

Principals to complete:

- Follow-up questionnaire, immediately following staff/teacher program completion.

Key: TFNQ = Teacher food and nutrition wellbeing questionnaire, HEQ = Healthy eating quiz (included as an activity to provide participants with a personalised diet quality report).

Note: Only the session names for Module one is given within the above figure to provide an example of the session and module format.

Figure 1: Provides overview of the complete program

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Brief description of online module content and activities

Module 1: Basic information on the connection between diet and wellbeing, with the focus on vegetable intake and diet quality.

Activities include completion of the HEQ, reflections of the impact of missed meals, reading data on the links between diet and wellbeing, simple match up activities and recipe creation challenge to boost vegetable and fibre intake.

Module 2: Provides content on meal planning, with a specific focus on preparing lunches and snacks for school.

Activities include revisiting and building on goals from module 1, reading data on the benefits of fibre and phytonutrients along with basic meal preparation advice, simple match up activities and using Padlet to swap and share food preparation hacks with colleagues.

Module 3: Centres around the barrier of finding time at school to eat lunch. Content focuses on individual school settings and schedules to make time for meals and preparation tasks.

Activities revisit and build on goals from module 1 and 2, reflections on the impact of time in stopping to eat meals at school, reading data on the benefits of culinary nutrition and meal sharing. Participants will be asked to consider their meal planning tips from Module 2 and review their school schedules to plan spaces to stop for lunches or look at where planning ahead may be needed to pack simple meals on the run or healthy snacks.

What are the risks and benefits of participating?

There are no anticipated risks to you or your staff in participating in this research.

Module content focuses on current research findings connecting the benefits of healthy food and nutrition practices with positive mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Each module focuses on practical tasks and how teachers can action small positive changes to develop skills and improve overall wellbeing.

Some questions within the questionnaire used in baseline and follow up, do address potentially sensitive issues such as reporting on your levels of professional burnout and stress as well as personal wellbeing. In the unlikely event that your teachers and staff find any of the questionnaire items to be upsetting or the activities too demanding, they can discontinue at any time.

Participants are also encouraged to make note of any of the following options to seek help and/or advice: to contact your local GP or your staff health or counselling services unit at your school or organisation. It is also possible to try the national counselling service helpline of Beyond Blue which is available 24/7 to offer advice and support via telephone (call [1300 22 4636](tel:1300224636)), [webchat](#) and [email](#) (email response provided within 24 hours).

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There are no direct benefits to you for completing the program. However, the resulting data will allow us to provide you and your School Leadership Team with aggregated (de-identified) study highlight report for your school, the results of which may be of help in planning future strategic staff wellbeing education programs.

Further each participating principal who completes both questionnaires (pre/ and post questionnaire) will receive a GiftPay voucher for their school as an acknowledgment of their time contribution to the study to the value of \$150.

How will your privacy be protected?

The questionnaires and modules are completely confidential. We will need consenting teachers and school staff to provide their work email address so that we can match their responses over time. However, any identifiable information will only be known to the project team, and participants will not be named or identified within any of the research outcomes, or in the reporting of the data back to the school.

Some interactive activities are provided within the online modules to allow participants to share ideas and strategies through online platforms such as Padlet where settings have been selected to show post content only with no name feature enabled to allow people to identify other participants posts.

The online teacher survey will be hosted by QuestionPro, and protected in accordance with their security policy, available at <https://www.questionpro.com/help/1.html>

Data (including data from participant completion of the HEQ within module one and at three months follow up) will be retained securely for a minimum period of 5 years from completion of the research and managed/stored in accordance with the University's Research Data and Materials Management Guideline (see <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=72>) or any successor Guideline, and applicable University of Newcastle policy provisions (as amended from time to time). Access to any identifiable data will be limited to members of the research team, unless teachers consent otherwise, except if required by law.

The HEQ team will also retain a copy of participant HEQ responses once each participant creates a profile within the HEQ. This database resides in Sydney, Australia (AWS Datacentre). If you wish to know more about the privacy policy and further information on data storing within the HEQ database, you can see the links below:

- Information security policy: <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=135>
- Data classification and handling policy and standard: <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=256>

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- Cyber security incident management procedure:
<https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=258>

Note: The HEQ is a resource created by University of Newcastle Researchers, the platform used for this study is the HEQ+ with your study account only valid for the length of this study.

Following the study participants will receive a link to the freely available HEQ tools and resources which are separate to the study. To continue using the HEQ beyond the study participants will need to create a new account which will also allow them to receive No Money No Time resources or notifications.

How will the information collected be used?

Collected data will be used for research publications and presentations and may also be used by higher degree students as part of their studies.

Non-identifiable data may also be shared with other parties to encourage scientific scrutiny, and to contribute to further research and public knowledge, or as required by law.

Research findings and quotes from qualitative data will be aggregated and de-identified before use in publications in a way that ensures individual participants cannot be indirectly identified based on their responses.

What do you need to do to participate?

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, please contact the research team.

If you would like your school to participate in this research, please click the link below to complete our online Principal Consent Form. Please note once consent is provided you will be directed to the Principal Baseline Survey.

<https://uninewcastle.questionpro.com.au/t/ARnRcZRzvB>

Further information

If you would like to ask any questions about the project, please email the project manager (Miss Tammie Jakstas) on tammie.jakstas@uon.edu.au or call 0403993409.

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Thank you for considering this invitation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. Jakstas'.

Tammie Jakstas
Student Researcher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Collins'.

Clare Collins
Laureate Professor

Concerns or complaints about this research

This project has been approved by the University of Newcastle College Human Ethics Advisory Panel, Approval No. H-2025-0087.

If you have concerns or complaints about the way the research is conducted, please contact Chief Investigator Laureate Professor Clare Collins. Or to contact someone independent of the research project, you can forward your concerns to:

Human Research Ethics Officer Research and Innovation Services

The University of Newcastle
University Drive
Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia
Phone: (02) 4921 6333
Email: Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au

Research Team Contact Details

Laureate Professor Clare Collins clare.collins@newcastle.edu.au
Dr Vanessa Shrewsbury vanessa.shrewsbury@newcastle.edu.au
Professor Tamara Bucher tamara.bucher@newcastle.edu.au
Dr Andrew Miller andrew.miller@newcastle.edu.au
Ms Tammie Jakstas tammie.jakstas@uon.edu.au or tammie.jakstas@newcastle.edu.au