

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled *Enhancing social media literacy to decrease body dissatisfaction: A randomised controlled trial*.

This project is being conducted by Dr Siân McLean from the College of Health & Biomedicine at Victoria University.

Project explanation

This study aims to investigate whether being involved in an online program, *REEL2REAL*, which helps people to look at social media from different perspectives, can assist young people to feel better about body image, eating worries, and mood. The study is open for men and women aged 18-25 years old who have some concerns about body image.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to complete some screening questions to determine if you are eligible to take part. This will take no more than five minutes. You will find out immediately if you are eligible to take part, that is, you are aged between 18-25 years and have some body image concerns.

If you are eligible, we will ask you to provide an email contact address and we will then send you an invitation to complete a 30 minute survey, to be done online. The survey will ask about your body image (in a bit more detail than the screening questions), your eating patterns, mood, and other questions about how you feel about yourself. After completing the online survey, you will then be randomly assigned by a software program to receive the *REEL2REAL* program either 1) immediately, or 2) after a short delay of four months. The program has three parts, and each will take about an hour to complete in total. The program parts may be completed in one sitting, or across multiple occasions.

To help us understand if the program is helpful for body image, eating concerns, and mood, you will be asked to complete the online survey again on two occasions over a period of four months. We will also collect some information about which parts of the online program you use.

What will I gain from participating?

Taking part in this research will help you to gain a different perspective on using social media. Importantly, this will assist you to feel better about your body image and mood, and make positive changes to your eating patterns.

How will the information I give be used?

The information you provide will be used to summarise the effect of the program. The summary of these effects may be published in peer-reviewed academic journals, or in the popular press, and presented at academic conferences. No individual information will be used, and no identifying information will be published or presented. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

Due to the focus of the survey questions on body image, eating patterns, and mood, some people may find some of the questions to be of a personal nature and sensitive. There may be a slight possibility that some individuals may experience some emotional distress, however, answering the questions is highly unlikely to

raise any *new* concerns for people. In addition, the *REEL2REAL* program aims to reduce any feelings of distress associated with these concerns.

If you would like to discuss any concerns you have about completing the surveys, or any distressing feelings regarding this project, please contact the Reel2Real team by email reel2real@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 5867, for assistance in seeking appropriate services, such as support from a psychologist. You may also wish to contact services directly to arrange support from a GP, mental health professional, psychologist, or psychiatrist. To do so, please contact Youth BeyondBlue (www.youthbeyondblue.com; p: 1300 22 4636 – 24 hours), Headspace (www.headspace.org.au; facebook.com/headspace) or eheadspace (www.eheadspace.org.au; p: 1800 650 890).

How will this project be conducted?

For the most part, the project will be conducted online. We will ask you to complete the survey three times over a period of about four months and you will take part in the *REEL2REAL* program over a period of about three weeks, either immediately after you finish the first survey, or after you have completed all three surveys. You will access the surveys and the *REEL2REAL* program online, at a time and location that is convenient for you. They can be accessed from mobile devices or computers. We may from time to time get in contact with you to remind you to check in to the program, or to complete the surveys at the appropriate time points.

Who is conducting the study?

Chief Investigator: Dr Siân McLean; Contact: +61 3 9919 5867; Email: Sian.Mclean@vu.edu.au

Co-investigator: Associate Professor Rachel Rodgers, Northeastern University, Boston, USA; Email: r.rodgers@northeastern.edu

Co-investigator: Professor Susan Paxton, La Trobe University, Melbourne; Email: susan.paxton@latrobe.edu.au

Co-investigator: Dr Joanna Doley, Victoria University; Contact: +61 3 9919 5516; Email: Joanna.Doley@vu.edu.au

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.