



Executive Summary
Experiential Awareness Therapy:
A feasibility and pilot trial, comparing Experiential Awareness Therapy with best practice

This is a study on the effectiveness of a new group therapy for eating disorders called **Experiential Awareness Therapy**, which is being undertaken for Mr Eames' PhD. *Experiential Awareness Therapy* is based on current research findings and utilises evidenced based psychotherapy techniques. People choosing to participate will be allocated to either current best practice group therapy (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) or Experiential Awareness Therapy. This study is being conducted at the University of Melbourne.

This study is open to anyone with disordered eating behaviours and concerns. Behaviours can be excessive restricting of calorie intake, self-induced vomiting, and binge eating. Eating disorder concerns can be excessive worry about body size, shape or calorie intake. To be eligible to participate people must be over the age of 18.

What is this program about?

Experiential Awareness Therapy is a psychotherapy that aims to increase psychological functioning in areas associated with increased risk of eating disorder symptoms. Experiential Awareness Therapy aims to:

- Increase participants' ability to manage their emotions
- Increase participants' positive feelings about themselves and explore how they feel toward others
- Improve participants' ability to identify and understand their emotions and also identify others intentions and emotions
- Help participants' understanding of how these skills might assist them in reducing their difficulties with eating.

Enhancing these skills has been shown to be helpful for recovery from problems with eating and may also enhance the quality of a person's life.

What will participation involve?

Those who choose to participate in the trial will receive free weekly group therapy from a psychologist with expertise in Eating Disorder treatment. Those participating in the study will be randomly allocated into either cognitive behaviour therapy enhanced or Experiential Awareness Therapy. Both treatments will be held weekly for 10 weeks, with a follow up support session 3 months post treatment completion. Sessions will run for 2-hours.

Participants in both group therapies will have the opportunity to; engage in group discussion, contemplate their psychological functioning in relation to disordered eating, consider of more beneficial ways of psychologically functioning and will have activities to complete between sessions.

Those participants selected for Experiential Awareness Therapy will also complete short meditating and gentle movement based activities.

Participant will complete questionnaires utilising pen and paper. Questionnaires will be completed at the start of therapy, the end of therapy and at the 3 month follow up session.

Measures are assessing participant psychological, daily functioning and severity of disordered eating. Measures will be utilised to gauge the effectiveness of the therapies. Participants will also complete a screening questionnaire to confirm that they are suitable candidates for therapy.

Please see attached information for further details or please contact Jasper Eames: Tel. 0437665465 or email. eames@student.unimelb.edu.au



Associate Professor Sophie Havighurst
Responsible Researcher and
Clinical Psychologist
Tel: 9371 0200
sophie.h@unimelb.edu.au

Dr Catharine McNab
Clinical Psychologist and
PhD Supervisor
Tel: 9371 0200
catharine.mcnab@unimelb.edu.au



Mr Jasper Eames
PhD Researcher
Tel: 0437665465
eames@student.unimelb.edu.au

Ethics approval

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: humanethics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.

Conflict of Interest: Jasper Eames wishes to disclose a conflict of interest as the developer of the Experiential Awareness Therapy. He may gain from any positive reports of the intervention outcomes.

Mindful – centre for training and research in developmental health

50 Flemington Street, Flemington Victoria 3031 Australia
t +613 9371 0200 f +613 9371 0250 w www.mindful.org.au