

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
**Exploring the benefits and impact of participation in improv
comedy and lived experiences on anxiety**

About the project

This study aims to explore anxiety and lived experiences between autistic and non-autistic people with improv comedy training and/or involvement. Participants will be asked about:

- their life experiences before and after participating in improv comedy;
- what makes an improviser easy to improvise with;
- fitting into the world;
- and their thoughts about the benefits of improv (if any).

Importantly, there will be questions about any unpleasant experiences in improv and how that impacted them and their involvement in improv. Participants should expect to be asked to partake in multiple interviews to refine the topics of interest and further discussions based on previous interviews from all involved.

Why are you being invited to participate?

In order to find out the effects and benefits of autistic adults participating in improv comedy, we need to get an in-depth understanding of their experience. To compare this to non-autistic people (including other neurodiverse people), we are inviting these population to participate too. This is why you are receiving this invitation.

What will I need to do if I agree to participate?

If you agree to take part, all you have to do is fill-in and return the consent form below. You will participate in an initial interview, which will be done at your convenience and solely online. Further interviews may take place to follow-up on findings with more questions of interest. The research is fully compliant with social distancing and you will not need to meet anyone in-person. The interview will ask you to think about your

experience in participating in improv comedy. The questions will be about what you gained and whether you benefitted from participating, and any bad experiences. Additionally, the interview will ask you about your life, whether you feel you have tried to not seem autistic, and how this may or may not have changed. Obviously, non-autistic people will not be asked this line of questions.

Non-verbal people will be able to participate through text-based interactions. These will be made available upon request.

You may participate in this study when you feel ready. The interviews will take between 45 to 60 minutes each.

You can return the form directly to Nathan via email to:

Nk411@kent.ac.uk

Do I have to take part?

No, participation is voluntary. Not doing so will have no effect on your involvement in other events. Once you return the filled-in consent form, you are able to arrange a date for an initial interview and complete a questionnaire about your demographic information. Once interviews begin, it is okay if you only want to take part in some questions – you can say so in the interview at any point.

If you think you won't like participating, you can decline. Not taking part is okay. You are the only person who can decide if you want to agree or decline to participate in the research. No one else can tell you what to say. If you agree now, you can change your mind whenever you want to.

What will happen with the information I provide?

The information you provide will be transferred straight to a datafile that is held securely on encrypted and password protected servers and computers at the University. No identifying information will be collected, and all data will be identified only by a numeric code.

What you tell us will not be said to anyone unless we think someone might be hurt. If so, we will talk to you first about the best thing to do.

The data will be analysed and used in a number of ways:

- A student thesis
- Several reports and academic papers
- Conference presentations

What if I have questions or want to give feedback

If you have any questions about the research either before you participate or afterwards, please contact either Nathan Keates (nk411@kent.ac.uk) or a research supervisor Prof. Julie Beadle-Brown (j.d.beadle-brown@kent.ac.uk) or Dr. Shaun May (s.r.may@kent.ac.uk).

If you would like to send feedback about how the research was conducted or are unhappy about anything to do with the research, you can also contact Julie (email above).

Thank you so much for considering our request for your participation. If you are happy to join the study, then please complete the consent form below.

Yours Sincerely,

Nathan Keates

URL: www.kent.ac.uk/tizard/

Consent Form

Exploring the benefits and impact of participation in improv comedy and lived experiences on anxiety

Please tick or mark each bullet point with an x if you agree.

- I have read the information sheet about the study and fully understand what is being asked of me.
- I understand that I shall complete a demographics questionnaire and that I will be asked questions about my life before and after improv comedy.
- I understand that my name will not be used in any reports, papers or presentations.
- I understand that I don't have to participate in any part of the study and even if I say yes now I can change my mind later.
- I understand that I can say no to any of the interviews.

- I understand that the interviews will be recorded.

I would like to take part in the improv comedy study (sign below)

Your name Date Signature

Researcher's name Date Signature