

SOFA Project

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

HREC Project Number:	HRE2023-0049
Project Title:	The SOFA Project: Increasing Responsiveness of Primary Care Services to Support LGBTIQ+ Individuals Experiencing or at Risk of IPV
Chief Investigator:	Dr Roanna Lobo, Senior Lecturer at Curtin University
Co-Investigators:	Dr Bronwyn Milkins, Research Officer at Curtin University Jack Farrugia, Research Officer at Curtin University Prof Sharyn Burns, Health Promotion Researcher at Curtin University Dr Peta Dzidic, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Curtin University Dr Jacqui Hendriks, Researcher in the Curtin School of Population Health
Version Number:	2.0
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What is the project about?

People who identify as LGBTIQ+ experience intimate partner violence (IPV) more frequently than non-LGBTIQ+ people but have been found to be less likely to access support services. The current research project seeks to better understand how to support LGBTIQ+ people experiencing IPV to access support services, so that services in Western Australia can respond to their needs. To achieve this aim, it is essential that we listen to LGBTIQ+ individuals about their interactions with primary care services. Your comments will directly shape the recommendations we make to primary care services and community-based organisations in Western Australia (WA) to support LGBTIQ+ individuals experiencing IPV.

Who is conducting the research project?

The project is being conducted by Chief Investigator Dr Roanna Lobo of Curtin University and Co-Investigators Dr Bronwyn Milkins, Jack Farrugia, Professor Sharyn Burns, Dr Peta Dzidic, and Dr Jacqui Hendriks. This project is funded by a grant from the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) and Curtin University are being subcontracted by the WA AIDS Council (WAAC) to conduct the research.

Why am I being asked to take part and what will I have to do?

We are looking for people aged 18+ who identify as LGBTIQ+ and are living in WA to take part in a focus group discussion that will be held over 2 hours at a time/date determined by the research team. Participants will need to have experienced IPV, supported someone who identifies as LGBTIQ+ with lived experience of IPV, or attempted (successfully or not) to access IPV support services.

‘IPV’ refers to abusive, coercive, or controlling behaviours within an intimate relationship and may include behaviours such as: Hitting, slapping, pushing; name-calling; limiting outside involvement with friends, family, community; intentionally transmitting HIV; forcing you to do something sexually



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that you don't want to do; threatening to tell someone who didn't know you were LGBTIQ+ about your sexual and/or gender identity; telling you to "act straight" around certain people; deliberate misgendering of trans partner; making you doubt reality through repeated lying.

A maximum of **eight** people will participate in the focus group discussion. Specific questions related to accessing professional support services relevant to IPV will be discussed in a friendly and open environment. A Facilitator from the research team will direct the discussion. Your comments will be used to inform the recommendations we make to professional support services in Western Australia in a final report.

You will have the option of attending a group session held at Curtin University's Bentley campus or an online session via Microsoft Teams. If you prefer, you can share your views in a 1-hour 1:1 interview.

To thank you for your time, at the end of the research activity we will give you a Coles-Myer eGift Card (for face-to-face participants) or a Coles eGift card (for online participants) worth \$37 (for a 1-hour 1:1 interview) or \$75 (for a 2-hour focus group discussion). Participants attending the Bentley campus in person will also be provided an additional \$20 eGift card to compensate for car parking and other transport costs.

Optional consent

We would like to audio-record the discussion you take part in, to allow us to later analyse the comments and inform the report. If you are taking part in an online focus group discussion or 1:1 interview, please be aware that the software we are using to audio-record the discussion also automatically records video. The video footage will not be used, and you are free to turn off your camera if you do not want to be video recorded. We do, however, require that your camera is turned on prior to the recorded discussion to verify your identity.

You are free to withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice or any negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw before completion of the discussion, we would like you to consider allowing us to use the data you provided before withdrawing in our project.

We would like you to consider allowing us to send you information about future opportunities to take part in this project; for example, to test how easy it is to locate inclusive services for intimate partner violence in WA, or to assist us in co-designing resources. Once you receive the information about these additional components of the study it is your choice if you decide to take part or not. You will be reimbursed for your time in all activities.

We would like to contact you with the results of this research project by email in approximately 12 months' time, so that you are aware of the contribution your participation has made to its final outcomes.

Are there any benefits to being in the project?

The comments you provide will be used to improve the accessibility and responsiveness of primary care services in WA who aim to support LGBTIQ+ individuals experiencing IPV. You may benefit from the knowledge that your comments may contribute to improved overall wellbeing for LGBTIQ+ individuals experiencing IPV. As well, sometimes, people appreciate the opportunity to discuss their feelings and opinions about their support needs and preferences as a person who identifies as LGBTIQ+.



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Are there any risks to being in the project?

You may find that talking about your opinions brings about some discomfort. We have been careful to make sure that the questions asked in the focus group discussion do not require you to disclose experiences of IPV. But, if you do experience distress about any of the questions, then you do not need to answer them. If you feel upset following participation in the focus group discussion or require advice on matters related to IPV, please contact the following free, confidential services with trained counsellors:

- 1800RESPECT (Family and sexual violence counselling) on 1800 737 732
- QLife (LGBTIQA+ peer support) on 1800 184 527
- Lifeline on 13 11 14

COVID-19 remains a risk for face-to-face participants. The researchers will adhere to Curtin University protocols regarding COVID-19 at all times, which may include the use of hand sanitiser and physical distancing. If you are unwell or displaying symptoms of COVID-19, we ask that you do not attend face-to-face.

Who will have access to my information?

The information collected in this research will be re-identifiable (coded). This means that we will collect data that can identify you but will then remove identifying information on any data and replace it with a code when we analyse the data. Only the research team have access to the code to match your name if it is necessary to do so. Any information we collect will be treated as confidential and used only in this project unless otherwise specified. The following people will have access to the information we collect in this research: the research team and, in the event of an audit or investigation, staff from the Curtin University Office of Research and Development.

Whilst all care will be taken to maintain privacy and confidentiality of any information shared at a focus group discussion, you should be aware that you may feel embarrassed or upset if one of the group members repeats things said in a confidential group meeting.

Electronic data will be password-protected and hard copy data (including audio recordings) will be in locked storage. The information we collect in this research will be kept under secure conditions at Curtin University for 7 years after the research is published and then it will be destroyed. The results of this research may be presented at conferences, published in professional journals, or published in reports to be shared between professional organisations. Direct comments may be published; however, you will not be identified in any results that are published or presented.

Will you tell me the results of the project?

We will write to you at the end of the research (in about 12 months) and let you know the results of the research. Results will not be individual but based on all the information we collect and review as part of the research.

Do I have to take part in the project?

Taking part in a research project is voluntary. It is your choice to take part or not. You do not have to agree if you do not want to. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, that is okay, you can withdraw from the project.

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What happens next?

If you decide to take part in this research, we will ask you to sign the consent form electronically at the start of the focus group discussion. By signing it is telling us that you understand the research project and what you are being asked to participate in.

Who can I contact about the research project?

To obtain further information about this project or answer any questions you have, you may contact Dr Bronwyn Milkins/Jack Farrugia (Research Officers) at sofa@curtin.edu.au or call Dr Roanna Lobo (Chief Investigator) on 9266 1101.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number HRE2023-0049). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.