

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

<b>Title</b>	Reliability of the Moral Injury Outcome Scale
<b>Short title</b>	Moral Injury Outcome Scale (MIOS)
<b>Protocol number</b>	273-20
<b>Project Sponsors</b>	Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Open Arms - Veterans and Families Counselling Service
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	Professor David Forbes (03) 9035 5926

This Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved participating in this research study. Knowing what is involved can help you decide whether you would like to participate. Please read this information carefully, and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary; there is no obligation to take part in the study. If you choose not to participate there will be no detriment to your future health care.

**Your answers will be completely confidential and any personal details, which may identify you will not be passed to the DVA or any ex-service organisation. Your answers will not in any way affect any pension, benefits or health services which you are entitled to from DVA, any ex-service organisation, or to which you may become entitled in the future. Members of the research team representing DVA or Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling Service, will only have access to summary (aggregated) findings of the study, and no access to individual or identifiable information will be permitted. Your de-identified data will only be accessible by the Phoenix Australia research team, and international collaborators of the study located in Boston, USA—The Boston team are leading the international consortium responsible for the research project.**

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you will be asked to proceed with the online survey which will indicate your implied consent. This is your copy of the Participant Information and Consent Form to keep.

### Brief description of the study

There is a growing understanding that experiencing or witnessing events that violate our own moral code or value system can lead to 'moral injury', but there is limited research to date focusing on the *impacts or consequences* of moral injury.

This study aims to develop an outcome measure of moral injury for military personnel who have experienced potentially morally injurious events (i.e., experiencing or witnessing acts that conflict with their deeply held moral beliefs, values, and expectations). The Moral Injury Outcome Scale (MIOS) will be available to military care providers to better identify and support Defence members impacted by these experiences.

This research is being undertaken by Phoenix Australia in partnership with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), Open Arms, and Defence, and is part of a broader international collaboration between Australia, USA, UK, Canada, and the Netherlands. It is hoped that when

the study is complete, the MIOS will become the gold standard measure to assess the impacts of moral injury world-wide.

### **What does participation in this research involve?**

Participation in this study involves completing an anonymous online survey. The survey asks questions about the consequences of exposure to military events which may have impacted your moral values (e.g., the impact on identity, relationships, beliefs, and behaviour). You will also be asked general questions about your background and different aspects of your life and ADF experience. You will be given the option to provide a very general description of any relevant event you've experienced, without any specific information such as names, dates, places. *Note, you are not required to provide this information* and can continue with the rest of the questions without answering this. If a mandatory reportable incident were to be identified in participants' responses, with the inclusion of names, places or dates, this anonymous information would be reported to the Australian Federal Police as a potential Breach of the Law of Armed Conflict under the Criminal Code Act 1995. In the event that a participant discloses any other mandatory reportable incident or intent e.g. risk of serious harm to others, researchers will follow the mandatory reporting obligations of registered health professionals as per the *Australian Psychological Society Ethical guidelines on reporting abuse and neglect, and criminal activity*.

This questionnaire is likely to take 15-20 minutes to complete. It is advised to complete the questionnaire in one sitting, however, there is the option to save and return to it later if you wish.

Direct access to the online survey is available from the following link: <https://is.gd/MIOStudy>

### **Benefits**

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from participating in this research, however possible benefits may include contributing to the development of better treatments for Defence members, as this study may help develop a greater understanding of the impacts of military experiences on mental health. However, there will be no direct benefit to you from participation in this research.

### **Risks of participating**

There are no foreseeable risks by participating in this study, however, it is possible that either during or following the survey you may experience some distress having thought further about the consequences of difficult military events. This is not a sign that anything is wrong with you, but simply means that it was a challenging experience. The questions asked in this study are for research purposes only and no action or interventions will be taken based on your responses.

Should you experience significant distress during the study we encourage you to stop the survey and speak with someone you trust, your care provider (e.g., GP, psychologist, chaplain), and/or call the following numbers for ongoing support:

- Open Arms - Veterans and Families 24hrs Counselling helpline (1800 011 046)
- Lifeline Australia (13 11 14)
- Beyond Blue (1300 224 636)

### **Withdrawal from the research**

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and there is no obligation to take part. If you wish to withdraw you can simply stop the survey and close your internet browser. Once you have submitted your responses to the online survey, we will be unable to locate and remove your responses as participant responses are not identifiable. If you choose not to participate or withdraw at any time there will be no detriment to your future health care.

## Privacy and confidentiality

Your responses to the online survey will be anonymous and thus the data collected will be non-identifiable. To further protect anonymity, specific ADF details (e.g., years of service, rank) will be aggregated into groups before reporting. The researchers will not be able to attribute individual responses to individual names or email addresses.

All responses will be securely stored in a data file, combined with other participants' responses, with any identifiable information linking responses to participants removed in advance. It is important to note, that your non-identifiable data will be transferred internationally to international collaborators and colleagues (located in Boston, USA) involved in this research study. The data file will be sent to the Boston team for analysis through secure, password protected, emails, and no data will be able to identify you or any other participant in the study. The Boston team will store this data in accordance with their ethical guidelines and legal frameworks which are of equal standing to the guidelines in Australia.

By consenting to participate in this project you are also giving extended consent, meaning that your non-identifiable data can also be used for future projects that are directly related to this one.

Research data collected will be maintained by Phoenix Australia, stored under lock and key or secure password access, and will be kept completely confidential. Your electronic data will be kept for five years from the date of publication of findings. After that time, your data will be securely destroyed by electronic deletion. Only the Phoenix Australia and Boston US researchers will have access to participant datasets.

## Other relevant human research ethics considerations

The ethical aspects of this research project have been approved by the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee (DDVA HREC). This project has been assigned the protocol number 273-20. Ethical approval for this project has been granted for a period of 18 months.

This project will be carried out according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

## Guidelines for Volunteers

A copy of the DDVA HREC Guidelines for Volunteers is available at [http://www.defence.gov.au/health/hrec/docs/Guidelines\\_for\\_Volunteers.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/health/hrec/docs/Guidelines_for_Volunteers.pdf) and for download from the survey information page.

## Dissemination of research findings

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be presented in reports to DVA, Open Arms, and Defence, and may be published in scientific journals as this study is part of a larger international collaboration. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that no individual can be identified (e.g., aggregated data).

Please contact the research team at [phoenix-mip@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:phoenix-mip@unimelb.edu.au) if you wish to receive a short summary of the overall findings at the conclusion of the project. Upon your request, the research team will email you a 200-word summary after the study is completed.

## Concerns or complaints

Should you have any complaints or concerns about the manner in which this project is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the co-ordinating principal investigator Dr Lisa Dell on 03 9035 5959 or [lisa.dell@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:lisa.dell@unimelb.edu.au), or you may prefer to contact the DDVA HREC at the following address:

Executive Officer  
DDVA HREC  
Telephone: (02) 6266 3807  
Email: [ddva.hrec@defence.gov.au](mailto:ddva.hrec@defence.gov.au)

### **Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research project is being conducted by Phoenix Australia. Phoenix Australia will receive payments from DVA to undertake this research project. No member of the research team will receive a personal financial benefit from your involvement in this research project (other than their ordinary wages).

***THIS INFORMATION SHEET IS YOURS TO KEEP***

## CONSENT FORM

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<b>Principal Investigator</b>	Professor David Forbes (03) 9035 5926

### ***THIS CONSENT FORM IS YOURS TO KEEP***

I give my consent to participate in the project mentioned above on the following basis:

I have read the aims of this research project, how it will be conducted, and my role in it. I am also aware I can contact the researchers at Phoenix Australia for any clarity.

I understand:

- the risks involved as described in the Participant Information Sheet
- there is no obligation to take part in this study
- if I choose not to participate there will be no detriment to my future health care
- I am free to withdraw at any time with no detriment to my future health care

I am cooperating in this project on condition that:

- the information I provide will be kept confidential
- the information will be used for this project and future related projects
- the research results will be made available to me at my request and any published reports of this study will preserve my anonymity
- I have been given a copy of the 'Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee (DDVA HREC) Guidelines for Volunteers'. [http://www.defence.gov.au/health/hrec/docs/Guidelines\\_for\\_Volunteers.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/health/hrec/docs/Guidelines_for_Volunteers.pdf).

If I wish to receive an automatic email that provides a short summary of the overall main findings (in approximately 200 words), I will contact the Phoenix Australia researcher team at [phoenix-mip@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:phoenix-mip@unimelb.edu.au) to provide my email address.

This is my copy of the participant information sheet and consent form to keep.

Should you have any complaints or concerns about the manner in which this project is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the researchers in person, or you may prefer to contact the Executive Officer, DDVA HREC on (02) 6266 3807 or [ddva.hrec@defence.gov.au](mailto:ddva.hrec@defence.gov.au)