

## Participant Information Sheet

### **Project title: Human-horse Learning and Loss**

#### **Invitation paragraph**

We are Jo Hockenull, Lynda Birke, and Nora Schuurman. For a long time we have been doing research on human-horse relationships, at universities in both the UK and in Finland. We are all lifelong horsewomen, too! In our research, we are interested in how horses and their people interact, and work together (Part 1). We are also interested in how both experience loss (Part 2).

We would like to invite you to take part in our research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, we would like you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it would involve for you. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Please ask us questions by email if anything is unclear. Our contact details are at the end of this form as well as on the project webpage.

#### **What is the purpose of the project?**

The two elements of this project build on our previous research in this area which left us with many unanswered questions. As they are about relationships and experiences that people have had with their horses, we can only answer them by talking to people who currently have, or have previously had, horses in their care.

In Part 1 of this project, we are hoping to further our understanding of how the relationships between horses and people develop.

In Part 2, we are asking for experiences of grief and/or loss either within a horse-human relationship, or from the perspective of your horse who may have lost a friend or companion.

#### **Why have I been invited to participate?**

We are looking for people who are aged eighteen or over, who currently care for a horse, or have cared for one in the past, to take part in the project.

In Part 1, we are specifically seeking help from people who has recently taken on a new horse (ie within the last six weeks).

Anybody who has been through or witnessed grief with a horse is invited to participate in Part 2 of the project, no matter how long ago the grief or loss experienced took place. This could be your own grief, or loss on the part of your horse.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether you wish to participate in the project. We describe the study on this information sheet and are happy to answer any questions you might have before you decide whether to participate or not. If you agree to take part, we will ask you to sign a consent form.

It is up to you whether you contribute to one or both elements of this study. We ask that you create a unique code for your contributions to Part 1 of the study. This will allow us to link your submissions if you provide us with regular updates. It also means that should you wish to withdraw from the study, we can identify your data and remove it from the study sample.

Part 2 is completely anonymous, and we will store no identifying codes.

### **What will happen to me if I take part and what will I have to do?**

There are two parts of this project. You can choose to participate in one, both or neither of them – it is totally up to you.

If you participate in Part 1 you will be asked to confirm that you have read and understood what the study is about and how your data will be used. If you agree you will be asked some questions some questions about you and your horse and given the option to submit some video footage of the two of you together. We would like to see clips of you doing routine handling tasks with your horse (for example, leading on a leadrope with directional changes, and catching the horse in a field or turn-out area). You will need to get the help of someone to film you doing these tasks if possible.

You will also be asked if you would like to send us regular updates and/or videos of you and your horse as your relationship develops – if you would like to do this, we will ask for your email address so that we can send you reminders to update us. Your email address will be stored separately to your data. Ideally, we would like you to tell us how you are getting on, and if possible, send us further video footage of the tasks above, every two-weeks for six-weeks from when you first sent us your data. So, overall we would hear about your relationship, and hopefully receive video of you both, three times in total over six weeks. You will also be asked to confirm that you have read and understood what the study is about and how your data will be used if you take part in Part 2 of the project. We will then ask you to upload your account of grief or loss experienced by you in relation to your horse, or by one of your horses. It is up to you what form this takes, how much you write and how much detail you give. This submission will be completely anonymous. We will not ask for your email address.

### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks involved in taking part in the project?**

You will be working with your own horse (or loan horse). We will not ask you to carry out any task that you would not do routinely with a horse. In no circumstance would you be asked to do anything that compromises the horses' welfare.

We appreciate that the subject matter covered in Part 2 of the project can be very personal and emotive. It is entirely your decision as to whether you take part, and how the amount of information you include in your contribution. Should you be in any way affected by your participation in this study, the following services offer support:

#### **The Blue Cross Pet Bereavement Service:**

Phone: 0800 096 6606 (available between 8.30am and 8.30pm every day)

Email: [pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk)

For other contact options: <https://www.bluecross.org.uk/about-pbss>

#### **The Samaritans:**

Phone: 116 123

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

For other contact options: <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

Or try other support services in your area.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

By taking part in this study, you will be helping us to understand more about the relationships between horses and people.

Regular contributions to Part 1 of the study will help you to see how your relationship with your horse is changing over time as you get to know each other.

### **Will my participation in this project be kept confidential?**

Your participation in this project will be kept confidential, during the study and after the project has been completed.

- One-off contributions to Part 1 will be anonymous; participants are only asked to leave their email address should they wish to be reminded to submit further contributions. Email addresses will not be stored with, or linked to, a participant's project data.
- Repeated submissions for Part 1 will be linked together using the unique identifier code generated by the participant (NOT by their email address) to protect anonymity
- Submissions for Part 2 will be anonymous
- Data will be password protected and stored securely on the University of Bristol's cloud services, with only the named researchers having access
- Data will not be shared with other parties

**If you decide that you no longer want your data to be part of this study you can contact any of the named researchers and ask for it to be removed, up until the point that it is submitted for publication. To withdraw from Part 1, we will need your unique identifier code to identify your data. To withdraw from Part 2, we will need you to provide some identifying information so that your data can be identified (this may be a name, place or other distinguishing feature mentioned in your story.**

### **What will happen to the results of the research project?**

All data will be anonymised in any outputs from this research (for example in webinars and publications). We will update participants and other interested parties in the progress of this research through the study website, Dr David Marlin's member site and webpage, as well as webinars through Dr David Marlin's media channels.

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

This research hasn't received any external funding. It is organised by the three named researchers – Jo Hockenull, Lynda Birke and Nora Schuurman.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

This project has been reviewed by the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Bristol.

The horse component for Part 1 has been approved by the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

**Further information and contact details**

Please contact us if you have any questions about the project and/or your involvement:

Dr Jo Hockenhull (University of Bristol, UK): [jo.hockenhull@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:jo.hockenhull@bristol.ac.uk)

Professor Lynda Birke (University of Chester, UK): [lbthepublisher1@gmail.com](mailto:lbthepublisher1@gmail.com)

Dr Nora Schuurman (University of Turku, Finland): [nora.schuurman@utu.fi](mailto:nora.schuurman@utu.fi)

If you have any concerns related to your participation in this study, please contact the Faculty of Health Science Research Ethics Committee, via the Research Governance Team, [research-governance@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:research-governance@bristol.ac.uk)