

Informed Consent Form: Storybook Project

The following consent form contains details about the *Storybook* project, your responsibilities as a participant, potential risks and benefits, and the story submission process. **Please read over the information carefully and ensure you understand what is involved.** Before consenting, you are encouraged to take your time in reading over the materials and discussing it with others. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sakina at RizviSa@smh.ca.

About the Storybook Project

The Storybook Project is an outreach initiative which aims to share the stories of those who have been affected by suicide – those who have made a suicide attempt and chosen life, those who have had a loved one attempt or die by suicide. The goal of this project is to spread awareness about suicide and mental health disorders, the reasons individuals have for deciding to live, and the struggles faced by those who have had experience with suicide. The personal stories of struggle may provide solace for those who are currently dealing with suicidal thoughts and are looking for reasons to go on living, or for others who have experienced the loss of a loved one to suicide. Evidence has shown that writing a story can also encourage healing through creativity. Additionally, sharing your story may raise awareness of this issue in the larger community and help to reduce the associated stigma.

Participation

Participation in the Storybook project is completely voluntary. To be eligible to submit a story, you must be 18 years of age or older. If you choose to participate, you will submit a personal story about your experience with suicide. It may be your survived suicide attempt, and your reasons for choosing life. Alternatively, you may wish to write about your experience losing a loved one to suicide, or a loved one's suicide attempt and how this impacted your life. **Please be aware that stories will be reviewed to ensure confidentiality of minors due to issues of privacy and consent.**

Privacy

Due to the sensitive nature of these stories, we understand that it may be difficult to share such personal details in a public setting. It is entirely your choice whether you want your own name to appear in the book, or if you would rather use a different name.

It is also important that the people mentioned in your account are aware that their story is being told, particularly if you are writing about a loved one who survived a suicide attempt. Not everyone may want to share their experiences publicly due to personal reasons, including the stigma associated with suicide or the possibility of being recognized. If you are writing a story about a loved one's suicide attempt, you must provide us with a signed liability waiver from that individual. If there are situations in which people in your story could be identified (even if real names are not used), we request getting a liability waiver signed by these individuals.

Submission Use

All submitted stories will be posted on the Storybook website (odnhub.ca/storybook) for others to read. Selected stories will be published in a book. The Storybook project will have the right to use your story in its outreach materials (including but not limited to online and print publication), as well as in promotion of those materials. Your story may be used and edited as necessary for publication and presentations. **You will retain the rights to the story you submit, including property rights and copyright.** If after submitting your story you decide that you

no longer wish to take part in the project, your story can be removed from the website at any time. Unfortunately, stories that have been selected for the book cannot be retracted once the book has been published.

Costs Associated with Participation

You will not receive compensation for your story. All proceeds in full from the book or outreach materials will go to the ASR Chair in Suicide and Depression Studies to support education, intervention and research in suicide. There is no cost to you to have your story published online or in the book.

Submitting Your Story

Stories may be submitted either by email or by mail. Emailed stories should be sent to Sakina at RizviSa@smh.ca. Stories should be emailed in .doc, .docx or .pdf format. If sending in your story by mail, hard copies can be submitted to ASR Chair in Suicide & Depression Studies, 193 Yonge Street, 6th Floor, Toronto, ON M5B 1M8.

Please print and sign the consent form and send it along with your story. If you are submitting online, you may scan the consent form to attach it to the email, or simply take a photo of the form and attach the image to your email. Ideally, liability waivers should also be included at time of submission, but can be sent at a later time.

Potential Risks

If you choose to use your own name in your submission, please consider that those you know can recognize you. Being identified in such a way may make you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed, or distress others who read your story. Even if you choose to use a pseudonym, there may be identifying features in your story that allow others to recognize you. Unfortunately, the *Storybook* project has no way to avoid that possibility.

It is also important to consider that unfortunately there is still a stigma associated with mental illness and suicide. Sharing your story and being recognized could lead to potential marginalization, distrust, job loss, feelings of guilt or shame, and/or being treated differently by others.

Additionally, it is possible that revisiting your experience may resurface some distressing or troubling thoughts or feelings. If you find yourself developing suicidal thoughts as a result of writing your story, please seek support.

If you are unsure about sharing your story, for any of the reasons listed or for others, please take time to consider the potential risks and potential benefits.

Potential Benefits

By sharing your story, you may be giving hope to those who are struggling with similar issues. People thinking about suicide may be able to relate to the submitted stories, and the experiences they read about may help them to avoid acting on their suicidal thoughts. By reading about the reasons people decided to live, people with current suicidal thoughts may be inspired to choose life as well. You will also be helping to spread awareness about suicide and mental health disorders among the larger community and to reduce the stigma associated with these issues. Additionally, you may find it rewarding to personally look back and see how you have grown and healed since your attempt.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at RizviSa@smh.ca.

Thank you for sharing your story.

I have read and understand the terms outlined above.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____