Participant Information for Teachers

Melbourne School of Population and Global Health

Project: Teacher Climate Superpowers (Phase II): piloting a teacher professional development program to support teacher wellbeing in the context of climate change

Key contacts:

- Professor Lisa Gibbs (Lead Researcher), lgibbs@unimelb.edu.au
- Dr Katitza Marinkovic Chavez (Investigator), marinkovick@unimelb.edu.au
- Phoebe Quinn (Investigator), phoebeq@unimelb.edu.au

Introduction

Thank you for considering participating in this study. We have invited you to participate in this study because of your interest in taking part in the **pilot of the Teacher Climate Superpowers Professional Development Program.**

This document provides information about the pilot study we are undertaking at the University of Melbourne in collaboration with the Teachers Health Foundation. Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about. **Participation is voluntary: there is no obligation to join this study, and you can withdraw from the project anytime.**

This project is being conducted by Professor Lisa Gibbs, Dr Katitza Marinkovic Chavez, Phoebe Quinn, Professor Dianne Vella-Brodrick, April Harrison, Robyn Molyneaux, Jane Nursey and Dr Rebecca Patrick from the University of Melbourne. Our team also includes Professor Mehmet Ulubasoglu (Deakin University), Associate Professor Sean Cowlishaw (Monash University) and Professor Erdal Tekin (American University, USA).

What is this study about?

The pilot of the Teacher Climate Superpowers Professional Development platform is the continuation of Your Climate Superpowers, an interactive website co-developed with young people between 12 – 25 years old on how to identify and use their strengths to navigate climate change.

In 2024, our team collaborated with teacher co-designers to create the **Teacher Climate Superpowers Professional Development (TCSPD) program to help support teacher well-being in the context of climate change and climate education.**

The TCSPD program will be piloted in 2025 as a free online resource for teachers. This pilot's outcomes will help improve the program and its platform and prepare the foundation for a future multi-school exploratory trial (2026-2027).

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate in this pilot study, we will ask you to provide your informed consent using this online form. The form includes a short survey to learn more about you and your work. After creating a personal user in the TCSPD platform, you will gain access to modules and activities that focus on teacher and student wellbeing in relation to climate change, and helping students reflect on

and act upon climate change in the classroom. Modules and activities also include surveys on teachers' views and experiences of the program and a pulse check of climate emotions. You can choose what resources you want to use and when. We will collect data from the surveys and pulse checks for our research on how to support climate wellbeing at schools, and continue improving the platform.

The platform also allows you to register for online webinars and workshops (1 hour each, online via Zoom) with our research team and other teachers in the program, to engage in group discussions on how to promote teacher and student wellbeing in the context of climate change. We will use different prompts and activities to gather everyone's ideas, such as creating mind maps on paper or using Padlet, an educational platform for working collaboratively online. You can choose to keep your camera on or off, and we will only keep the audio recording of the activity. These activities will be audio recorded and transcribed for research using Microsoft Word's automated transcription feature or Scribefire, a professional transcription service. Information captured in the workshop recording will be subject to Microsoft's Services Agreement and Privacy Statement, as well as Scribefire's Policy Privacy. Padlet is based overseas, and data collected in Padlet will be subject to Padlet's terms of service and privacy policy.

We truly appreciate teachers' interest in participating in this project and aim to work with diverse teachers regarding aspects like gender, cultural background, location, teaching role and career stage. Due to time and resource limitations, it may not be feasible for everyone to take part in some live online events if we receive more expressions of interest than we can respond to. If this happens, we will get back to everyone who expressed their interest and explore alternatives for carrying out more reflective practice sessions.

What are the possible benefits?

We hope that this project will lead to better support for teachers to deal with the challenges of climate change. We will share our findings with policymakers and practitioners for this purpose. The Teacher Climate Superpowers Professional Development platform will also be freely available online.

What are the possible risks?

We will not ask you any questions that may bring back distressing memories related to your work or experiences dealing with climate change. Instead, we will focus on what strengths and resources can help teachers navigate climate change's challenges to their wellbeing and profession.

There are no likely risks from participating, and we are experienced in supporting people through difficult emotions. If you feel uncomfortable or distressed during the activities, you can stop at any time or skip any questions you do not want to answer. If you are experiencing high levels of anxiety or stress in relation to work, climate change or other experiences that may be related to the topic of this project and that may require specialised mental health support, we advise you not to participate. At the end of this letter, we have also provided information about support services which may be useful if you are experiencing any distress.

Do I have to participate?

Not at all. Participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time before or during the program and it will not affect your participation in any activities and services offered by the Teachers Health Foundation. Please note that if you withdraw from the pilot study after its completion, it may

be difficult to withdraw any contributions you have made that have already been combined with other responses and de-identified in the analysis and reporting. We may also be unable to differentiate and delete what you said during reflective practice sessions.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

Yes! We are keen to let you know the results. We will share a summary with you via email. We will also develop scientific and media articles and presentations and share these outcomes with all the teachers in this project.

What will happen to information about me?

We have several procedures in place to keep information about you and your contributions to this study safe and confidential, subject to any legal requirements. For example, we may include quotes from something you said, but we will not publish them with any information that may help identify who you are. However, because this is a small study with few participants, there is a possibility that someone who knows you may recognise your comments, or other participants may share what you have said outside of group activities. If you say something that you don't want to be included in our reports, you can let us know, but if this is a concern to you, we recommend that you do not participate.

We will keep information from the project on the servers of the University, in line with legal requirements, for 10 years. During that time, data from this project may be used for future projects related to people's experiences of navigating eco-distress and/or climate and sustainability education by our team members.

Who is funding this project?

This project is funded by the Teachers Health Foundation.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact Dr Katitza Marinkovic Chavez to +61390357595 or katitza.marinkovic@unimelb.edu.au

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

The Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne has approved this research project. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, please contact the **Manager, Human Research Ethics, Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010:**

- Tel: +61383442073
- Email: HumanEthicscomplaints@unimelb.edu.au.

All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project (ID 25818).

Where can I get support if I want counselling for myself?

There are several ways in which you can get one-off or multi-session counselling for yourself. These are all independent of this project. We are more than happy to talk about these options.

In general, good places to start for one-off support are Lifeline (https://www.lifeline.org.au or phone 13 11 14) and Beyond Blue (https://www.beyondblue.org.au or phone 1300 22 4636). These services are all free of charge.

For multi-session support, a general practitioner (GP) can provide you with a mental health treatment plan to get a Medicare rebate and refer you to a mental health professional. You can also search for these yourself via Find a Psychologist and Find a Social Worker (you can insert key words to search for specialisations). Finally, your organisation may have an independent Employee Assistance Program.

For support tailored for people who are experiencing distress due to climate change, Psychology for a Safe Climate provide a wide range of resources and activities. You can also seek for professional support using their Climate Aware Practitioner on the Climate Aware Practitioner Directory.