Information Sheet for Contributors

We invite you to participate in the Pandemic Journaling Project, which is a platform for journaling during the COVID-19 Pandemic and also a research study. This form describes the study and answers common questions. The study is led by Dr. Sarah Willen at the University of Connecticut and Dr. Katherine Mason at Brown University.

**What is the purpose of this study?**
With this research, we hope to learn about impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people’s everyday lives. We also hope you will find it meaningful to make journal entries and preserve a record of your experience of this time. We welcome as many participants as are willing to take part. You can learn more about the project and research team at https://pandemic-journaling-project.chip.uconn.edu/.

**What does it mean to participate?**
You will be asked to make weekly journal entries describing your experience during the coronavirus pandemic using written text, audio, or images. Before describing your experiences for the first time, you will be asked to fill out a 6-minute survey about yourself and your views. You will then be asked to respond to two open-ended questions about your experiences. You can type your entries, record your voice, or upload and describe a relevant image. We expect it will take about 10-15 minutes to respond to both open-ended questions together, but you are free to take more time if you want to.

For the duration of the pandemic, we will then contact you once each week by text message (SMS) or email to invite you to make your next journal entries. To sign up for these weekly reminders, you only need to provide an email or phone number. We will never ask for your name or any other personal information.

Each week we will ask a few brief survey questions, and then two open-ended questions. The survey questions will take about 2 minutes, and the open-ended questions together will take about 10-15 minutes, or longer if you want to spend more time on them. We do not know how long the pandemic will last, but your participation is voluntary, and you are not obligated to respond every week. Additionally, we may contact you later to ask if you would be interested in participating in a follow-up interview. We may also reach out after the World Health Organization has formally declared the pandemic over to follow up with additional survey and journaling opportunities. Agreeing to participate now does not obligate you to participate in any follow-up activities.

**Risks**
There are no known risks for participating in this study. We expect that participation in this study presents no greater risk than everyday use of the Internet.

**Benefits**
There are no direct benefits to participating, financial or otherwise, but there are some indirect benefits. Your participation will let you create a record of your experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and, more broadly, it may help us understand how different people experience this time. Making journal entries also has a positive impact on mental health for some people, although this may or may not be your experience.
**Is participation voluntary?**
Participation in this project is entirely voluntary. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to participate but later change your mind, you can drop out at any time. You can skip any question that you don’t want to answer. You can also “unsubscribe” from the weekly invitations to participate. If you withdraw from the study and want your contributions removed from our database, you may contact us at pandemicjournaling@gmail.com. Once the study ends, it will no longer be possible to remove your contributions from our database. If you choose to participate, we will never use your email address and/or phone number for any purpose other than for our weekly reminder links and a possible invitation for follow-up activities in the future.

**Will my contributions be confidential?**
Your contributions, including journal entries (written, audio, and/or images) and survey responses, will be stored on a password-protected server and identified by a unique code. We will do our best to protect the confidentiality of the information that we gather from you, but can only guarantee that we will strictly maintain your confidentiality to the extent possible by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. Your contact information will be stored separately from your survey responses and journal entries, but it is possible that voice recordings and/or specific information you decide to include in your journal entries may be recognizable.

**How can I access my own journal entries?**
All journal entries you submit (written, audio, and/or images) will be accessible on the website’s “MyJournal” tab, where you can log in using a password to view and download your own entries.

**Can I share my journal entries publicly?**
Every time you submit a new journal entry, you have the option of giving us permission to make that entry public on the Featured Entries tab. If you do not click on the button and give us permission to share a particular entry, that entry will be accessible only to you and to our research team for research purposes. Only a portion of entries that participants mark as “public” will be posted on the website.

If you give permission to share a photo on the website that includes any faces, the faces will be digitally blurred before being made public. We also ask that you record only your own voice, and we will not publicly share any audio that includes more than one voice, even if permission has been granted. Once again, your contact information (i.e., email or phone number) will never be shared publicly.

**Who will have access to my contributions, now and in the future?**
With the exception of any journal entry or entries you have given us permission to share publicly, your contributions will only be used for research purposes. These contributions will not be immediately accessible to the public.

For the next 25 years, journal entries and survey data that you have not explicitly marked for public sharing on our website will be used for research purposes only and will be accessible to researchers only. We will deposit your journal entries and survey responses in a digital data repository. A digital data repository is a secure online space that helps researchers share information they learn from their studies with other researchers, who can then use that information in their own studies, public presentations, and publications like articles and books. This way we can all keep learning together. Researchers who want to use information from the Pandemic Journaling Project will have to follow certain rules. They may only publish images where faces have been digitally blurred. Also, they may...
only publish transcripts of audio recordings with identifying information removed -- they will not be allowed to share the recordings themselves. Researchers using the digital repository will not have access to your email or phone number.

Twenty-five years after this project concludes, all of your contributions in the digital repository, including journal entries and responses to survey questions, will become a historical record accessible to the public. Your submissions will be archived in the form you submitted them, as original text, audio recording, or image. They will not be altered to conceal your identity. However, to protect your privacy, the contact information you have provided (email address and/or phone number) will never be made part of this public record, and we will never record your name.

The researchers and their associated universities retain the right to copy, reformat, migrate or otherwise transform the materials you submit in physical and digital form for the purposes of long-term preservation and to support research and discovery in an educational setting. Researchers who follow rules established by the relevant archive for handling and using primary sources will have full access to these materials.

What kind of content can I share?
All materials you submit should be original -- that is, created or owned by you -- and are subject to United States Copyright law. Your submission must not violate any laws: If we receive a lawful subpoena or court order, we may be required to turn over any contributions and related information (email address, descriptive information, etc.).

You may be removed from the study if you attempt to make public any entries that contain malicious or deeply inappropriate material, or if you violate any copyright laws. You will be notified by text or email if you have violated any of these terms. If you are removed from the study, you will no longer be invited to complete weekly entries and will not be contacted for any follow-up studies.

There are some things we cannot keep confidential. The journal entries submitted for this project will be monitored by the research team, and each week a small number of entries will be randomly selected for close review. If in their review the research team comes across material that is subject to mandated reporting laws, such as reports of sexual misconduct or assault, the research team may be required to turn this information over to your local authorities.

What if I have additional questions?
We would be happy to answer any questions you may have about this project. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the lead researchers, Dr. Sarah S. Willen (University of Connecticut) and Dr. Katherine A. Mason (Brown University), by email at pandemicjournalingproject@gmail.com. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 860-486-8802. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants. You should also know that the UConn IRB may inspect study records as part of its auditing program, but these reviews will focus on the researchers and not on your responses or involvement.

Please keep a copy of this information sheet for your records. You can download a pdf here.

If you would like to participate, click ‘I agree’ to begin. By clicking “I agree” you acknowledge that you are 18 years or older and have read and understood the terms of participation outlined above and your rights as a participant. Or, you can click ‘I don’t agree’ to exit.