

## Supporting adolescent mental health within a school's culture and curriculum: A critical ethnography that invites adolescents to Utah's mental health conversation

### Introduction

Your child has been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Steven Camicia, a professor in the *School of Teacher Education and Leadership* at Utah State University, and Diana West, a doctoral student in the *School of Teacher Education and Leadership*. The purpose of this study is to try to better understand how high school students in Utah experience depression, anxiety, isolation, feelings of hopelessness, and/or suicidal ideation. It will explore, from the student perspective, how a school's climate, culture, programs and curriculum might impact student mental health, and how the adults at school can do a better job of supporting adolescent mental health.

This form includes detailed information to help you decide whether or not to let your child participate in this study. Please read it carefully and ask any questions you have before you agree to let your child participate.

### Procedures

Your child will be asked to participate in one or more informal interviews with a researcher about their experience with or general impressions about adolescent depression, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and/or suicidal ideation. Your child will be asked to think about how the policies, practices, climate, and curriculum of a school might impact student mental health. The researcher will use a set of questions (attached) as a springboard for discussion and will record observations and insights that your student is willing share. Your child's participation in the initial interview is anticipated to last between 40 and 60 minutes. The researcher may invite your child to continue with the study after the initial interview, and to meet for one or two additional 40 to 60 minute conversations. We anticipate that between 12 and 40 students will participate in this research study. Participation is completely voluntary.

As a part of this study, your student will be invited to share any creative work that they have produced (such as poetry, artwork, original music, essays, photography, film, etc.) that addresses the subject of adolescent depression, anxiety, isolation, feelings of hopelessness, and/or suicidal ideation. Nothing that your child has written or created will be used in this study without your and your child's explicit consent. Any identifying information, such as names, places, or information about families, will be omitted. Your child may also choose to submit one or more artifacts (poetry, artwork, original music, essays, photography, film, etc.) without being interviewed. You will find a check box at the end of this consent form to choose this option.

Because the researchers do not want to put any child at risk, each student participant will complete the Columbia Suicide Severity Risk Scale (C-SSRS), a very short, simple survey that is designed to detect suicidal ideation or behavior. If your child is rated as "at risk for suicide," you will be notified immediately and will be provided with intervention resources. For your child's protection, their participation in the study will be ended and any data gathered will be destroyed immediately. A child with suicidal intent or behavior needs to work with clinical professionals who are qualified to support them during a time of crisis.

The day after each interview, your child will receive an email from the researcher checking in and reminding your child of the mental health resources available to them and encouraging them to access those resources if they feel they need to. Your child will also be reminded of the voluntariness of the study and their right to review their interview transcripts, and they you wish, clarify or expand on anything discussed in the interview.

## Risks

This study presents minimal risk to your child, meaning that the risks are no greater than those your child encounters in everyday activities. The foreseeable risks include potential discomfort during the interview process, possible feelings of anxiety or depression triggered by talking about past experiences, or a risk of loss of confidentiality. To minimize these risks and discomforts, the researchers will follow ethical guidelines and standards of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). They will be guided by the Code of Conduct of the American Psychological Association (APA) throughout the study to ensure that conversations are supportive, non-threatening, and non-coercive and that your and your child's privacy and confidentiality are fully protected. The researchers are not mental health professionals, but will follow these professional ethical guidelines to ensure that your child is always treated with respect and dignity and that their needs are recognized and addressed. During each interview, the researcher will check with your child frequently to be sure that they are comfortable continuing with the interview. The researcher will encourage your child to ask for clarification when needed, and will encourage them to end the conversation if they are uncomfortable in any way. Your child will never be required to answer a question they are not comfortable answering. For the duration of this study, your child will have access to additional support from the school's social worker, high school counselor, or a school administrator upon request. No one but the researchers will know who is participating in this study, but the school's administration and counselors are aware of the study and are happy to meet with you or your child should the need arise. You can also request a referral to a local mental health professional for your student. These services are available to your child, whether or not you feel that any discomfort or trauma they may be feeling is the result of this study. If, at any time, you feel that you have a bad research-related experience or that your child is harmed in any way during their participation, please contact Dr. Steven Camicia, the principal investigator of this study, at 801-518-3193 or [steven.camicia@usu.edu](mailto:steven.camicia@usu.edu).

## Benefits

Research is an important way to learn more about adolescent depression, anxiety, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation so that we can do a better job of creating school environments that promote positive mental and emotional support for students. Participation in this study may directly benefit your child by providing them with an additional avenue for sharing their experiences with depression, anxiety, and/or suicidal ideation. More broadly, this study will help the researchers to learn more about how educators and educational policy makers in Utah can develop school programs and curriculum that will do a better job of supporting the mental and emotional health of Utah's teens in the future. As a participant in this study, you and your child are provided with access to the website [www.teenvoices.org](http://www.teenvoices.org), which was created for this study and provides information about local mental health organizations and links to mental health literature and information.

## Confidentiality

Researchers will make every effort to ensure that the information your child provides as part of this study remains confidential. Your child's identity and the identity of the school will not be revealed in any publications, presentations or reports resulting from this research study. Although it is unlikely, it may be possible for someone to recognize your child's particular story/situation/responses. Before any responses are included in this study, your child will be invited to review what is written and to revise or withdraw any information they choose not to include in the study. Every effort will be made to conceal your child's identity by using pseudonyms, altering details of narratives and, if necessary, creating composite characters in the narrative so that no individual child's story is identifiable. Once you have provided permission for your child to participate in this study, you will not be given access to your child's interview transcripts or recordings unless there is a concern that your child might harm themselves.

The researcher will collect your child's responses during interviews using typewritten notes and with digital audio recordings to ensure accuracy. This data will be securely stored in a restricted-access folder on Box.com, an encrypted, cloud-based storage system and in a locked drawer in a restricted-access office. Recorded data will be destroyed as soon as recordings are transcribed. All other data and study materials will be destroyed upon completion and publication of this study, estimated to be December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018, but no later than December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019. This form will be kept for three after the study is complete, and then it will be destroyed.

It is unlikely, but possible, that others (Utah State University or state or federal officials) may require the researchers to share information gathered for the study to ensure that the research was conducted safely and appropriately. We will only share your information if law or policy requires us to do so. If the researchers learn that you or your child are abusing or neglecting another individual, or if your child expresses intent to harm themselves or another individual, state law requires that the researchers report this behavior or intention to the authorities.

### **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal**

Your child's participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you and your child agree to participate now and change your mind later, you may withdraw at any time by contacting Dr. Steven Camicia either by phone (801-518-3193), or email ([steven.camicia@usu.edu](mailto:steven.camicia@usu.edu)), or Diana West, either by phone (801-623-1388), or by email ([dianamadsen1@gmail.com](mailto:dianamadsen1@gmail.com)). If you or your child choose to withdraw after we have already collected information from your child, your child's data will be destroyed immediately. If you decide not to allow your child to participate, the education and support your child receives from Walden School of Liberal Arts will not be affected in any way. The researchers may choose to terminate your child's participation in this research study if your child is rated as "at risk for suicide" on the Columbia Suicide Severity Risk Scale (C-SSRS). In the event that this happens, you will be notified by phone and email immediately.

### **IRB Review**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human research participants at Utah State University has reviewed and approved this study. If you have questions about the research study itself, please contact the student investigator, Diana West, either by phone (801-623-1388) or by email ([dianamadsen1@gmail.com](mailto:dianamadsen1@gmail.com)) or contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Steven Camicia, by phone (801-518-3193), or by email ([steven.camicia@usu.edu](mailto:steven.camicia@usu.edu)). If you have questions about your rights or would simply like to speak with someone other than the research team about questions or concerns, please contact the Utah State University IRB Director at (435) 797-0567 or [irb@usu.edu](mailto:irb@usu.edu).

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Diana West  
Student Investigator  
(801)-623-1388: [dianamadsen1@gmail.com](mailto:dianamadsen1@gmail.com)



**Informed Consent**

By signing below, you agree to let your child participate in this study. You indicate that you understand the risks and benefits of participation, and that you know what your child will be asked to do. You also agree that you have asked any questions you might have and are clear on how to stop your child’s participation in the study if you choose to do so. Please be sure to retain a copy of this form for your records.

- I agree to let my child be interviewed.
- I agree to let my child be interviewed and to let my child share artifacts they have created (such as poetry, artwork, original music, essays, photography, film, etc.) that address the subject of adolescent depression, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and/or suicidal ideation. (Even if you check this box, you can change your mind later.)
- I would rather not let my child be interviewed, but I am willing to let my child share artifacts they have created (such as poetry, artwork, original music, essays, photography, film, etc.) that address the subject of adolescent depression, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and/or suicidal ideation. (Even if you check this box, you can change your mind later.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature  
*(required if participant is under 18)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name, Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature  
*(required if both parents are alive, known, competent, reasonably available, and have legal responsibility for or custody of child. Otherwise, the permission of one parent is sufficient.)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name, Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Youth Assent

### Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Steven Camicia, a professor in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University, and Diana West, a doctoral student in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership department at Utah State University. The purpose of this study is to try to better understand how high school students in Utah experience depression, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and/or thoughts of suicide.

This form includes detailed information to help you decide whether or not to participate in this study. Please read it carefully and ask any questions you have before you agree to participate.

### Procedures

If you are willing to be a part of this study, you will be asked to participate in a 40 to 60 minute conversation with the researcher. In this conversation, you can share experiences you have had with depression, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, or even suicidal thoughts. You may be asked to think about how the programs, climate, and curriculum at a school (Walden, or any other school) impact student mental health. The researcher will ask you some questions, but she is mostly interested in listening to your stories. After the first interview, you may be asked if you are willing to participate in one or two additional 40 to 60 minute conversations. You can end your participation at any time—even during the first interview.

As a part of this study, you may be invited to share any artistic work that you have created (such as poetry, artwork, original music, essays, photography, film, etc.) that addresses the subject of adolescent depression, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and/or suicidal thoughts. Nothing that you have written or created will be used in this study without your consent. You do not have to share anything at all.

For your safety, you will also be asked to complete a short simple survey that is designed to detect suicidal ideation or behavior. If you are rated as “at risk for suicide,” you and your parents will be notified immediately and will be provided with intervention resources. For your protection, your participation in the study will be ended and any data gathered will be destroyed immediately.

The day after each interview, you will receive an email from the researcher checking in and reminding you of the mental health resources available to you and encouraging you to access those resources if you feel you need to. You will also be reminded of the voluntariness of the study and your right to review your interview transcripts, and if you wish, clarify or expand on anything discussed in the interview.

### Risks

Before you agree to participate in this study, you should know that there are possible risks to you. During the interview, you might feel uncomfortable or anxious. Please know that you can ask to stop the interview at any time. Because of the difficult topics we will talk about, you may experience feelings of sadness or depression during the interview, or even after the interview is over. We will do everything we can to minimize any discomfort. The researcher will check in with you throughout the study to make sure that you feel supported and that you don't feel threatened or coerced in any way. The researcher is not a mental health professional, but she will follow professional and ethical guidelines to ensure that you are always treated with respect and dignity and that your needs are being met. She will be available to talk with you if you have additional questions or concerns. During interviews, the researcher will check in with you to be sure that you are comfortable continuing. She will encourage you to ask for clarification when you don't understand something, or to redirect or end the conversation at any time. You will never

be required to answer any question that you are not comfortable answering. During this study, you can ask for additional support from the school counselor, social worker, or administrator. They do not know who is participating in this study, but they are willing to talk to any student who needs their help. You can also request a referral to a local mental health professional. These supports are available to you whether or not you feel that any discomfort or trauma you are feeling is the result of this study. If at any time you feel that you have a bad research-related experience or that you are harmed in any way during your participation, please contact the principal investigator of this study, Dr. Steven Camicia, either by phone (801-518-3193), or email (steven.camicia@usu.edu).

### **Benefits**

Research is an important way to learn more about adolescent depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation so that we can do a better job of creating school environments that promote positive mental and emotional health for high school students. You may directly benefit from this study by having an additional avenue for sharing your experiences with depression, anxiety, and/or suicidal ideation. This study will help us to learn more about how adults can support the mental and emotional health of Utah's teens in the future. As a participant in this study, you will also be provided with a packet of mental health support resources, including information about local mental health organizations, mental health literature, and links to online resources.

### **Confidentiality**

The researcher will make every effort to ensure that the information you provide as part of this study remains confidential. Your identity and the identity of the school will not be revealed in any publications, presentations, or reports resulting from this research study. However, it may be possible for someone to recognize your particular story/situation/response. Before any responses are included in this study, you will be invited to review what is written and to revise or withdraw any information you choose not to include in the study.

As the researcher talks to you about your experiences and thoughts, she will use a digital audio recording to ensure accuracy, but she will destroy any tapes as soon as they are transcribed. The written and recorded information she collects will be securely stored in a restricted-access folder on Box.com, an encrypted, cloud-based storage system and in a locked drawer in a restricted-access office. All data and study materials will be destroyed upon completion and publication of this study, estimated to be December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018, but no later than December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019. This form will be kept for three years after the study is complete, and then it will be destroyed.

### **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate now and change your mind later, you may withdraw at any time by contacting Dr. Steven Camicia either by phone (801-518-3193), or email (steven.camicia@usu.edu), or Diana West, either by phone (801-623-1388), or by email (diana@waldenschool.us). If you choose to withdraw after we have already collected information from you, your data will be destroyed immediately. If you decide not to participate, the education and support you receive from Walden School of Liberal Arts will not be affected in any way. We may choose to end your participation in this research study if you are at risk for suicide, as determined by the Columbia Suicide Severity Risk Scale (C-SSRS). If this should happen, we will notify your parents and provide your intervention resources and support as requested.

### **Your Permission:**

Not everyone who is a part of research studies will benefit from it. During the study, it is possible that nothing directly good will happen to you. But your participation in this study is important for helping us to learn more about how to better support the mental health of Utah adolescents in the future.

If this sounds like something you would like to do, we will ask you to say that you understand what we talked about, and that you do want to participate. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. No one will be upset if you don't want to do this, or if you change your mind later.

You can ask any questions you have, now or later. Your parents know about this research study and they have said that you can participate, if you would like to.

If you would like to be in this study, please check the box or boxes that apply to you, sign your name and write the date.

- I agree to be interviewed.
- In addition to being interviewed, I may be willing to share artifacts I have created (such as poetry, artwork, original music, essays, photography, film, etc.) that address the subject of adolescent depression, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and/or suicidal ideation. (Even if you check this box, you can change your mind later.)
- I would rather not be interviewed, but I may be willing to share artifacts I have created (such as poetry, artwork, original music, essays, photography, film, etc.) that address the subject of adolescent depression, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and/or suicidal ideation. (Even if you check this box, you can change your mind later.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date