

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Exploring the Lived Experiences of Workplace Ostracism

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Hello! I am a PhD Business Administration Student with Saint Mary's University. As part of my PhD program requirements, I am conducting my thesis research under the supervision of Dr. Albert Mills.

You are being invited to participate in research related to the lived experience of workplace ostracism. **We are inviting working men and women in Canada who have experienced ongoing workplace ostracism to participate in the study.** We are looking for people who are currently, or have in the past, experienced ongoing workplace ostracism. Workplace ostracism is defined as intentionally being excluded or ignored at work, often in very subtle or sneaky ways. Examples might include that your name is left off of an important meeting invitation, people don't respond when you speak to them, or you aren't acknowledged when you come into a room.

The purpose of this research is to explore the lived experiences of ostracism experienced by employees. The current knowledge of workplace ostracism is limited. There is no research to date on the experiences of those who have experienced repeat workplace ostracism. As a result, there is also no research on how to cope with workplace ostracism, or what employers can do to address this workplace problem.

You would be interviewed in a private office space by one female interviewer, either electronically or over the phone. It is expected that the interview would last 1 hour, with a maximum of 2 hours. The interviews will be coded using a different name that you will select. The place of work will not be identified except to the interviewer. In the report, the workplaces and positions will not be revealed. Once the transcript of the interview is typed, you will be asked to review the transcript for accuracy and completeness, if you would like to continue participating. This is not required. You will also receive a draft copy of the findings of the research, and will be asked to comment on the findings and recommendations. This is also not required, but an option should you wish to continue participating. You will receive a complete copy of the research document at the end of the project. All of these documents will be delivered to securely, ensuring confidentiality and the protection of your information. The final version of the transcripts will be stripped of all identifying information and will be safely stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office. You would be interviewed in the summer/fall, and asked to provide feedback on two additional occasions, throughout the fall of 2015. A final copy of the report is expected by December 2015.

The benefit of participating in this research is that it will afford you the opportunity to reflect on your ostracism experiences and how you were able to cope with such experiences. Self-reflection can be an empowering learning experience. You will also be making a very valuable contribution to an area of research that has not yet been explored. Our goal of this project is to be able to make recommendations that would improve the situations of those experiencing workplace ostracism.

It is unlikely that you will have a negative response to the interviews. However, there is a small risk that the re-visiting of the lived experiences could cause a minor psychological or emotional distress. The format of the interview is very open and you can determine what information you would like to share. We would like to know about the situation, what occurred, how you responded and coped, and how others in your workplace responded. You will be provided with a local 24 hour telephone support line, which we encourage you to call if you do have an adverse reaction.

You can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by stopping the interview or by contacting the researcher. Any information that is provided would be destroyed if you withdraw from the study.

The data from the interviews will be combined with other interviews to identify trends or unique situations that people who experience ongoing workplace ostracism face. In addition to using this information to complete my thesis, I would also to share this information with the research community at conferences or in an academic publication.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this research opportunity with you in more details, and can be contacted at the information provided below. Thank you for considering participating!

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Certification:

The Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board has reviewed this research. If you have any questions or concerns about ethical matters or would like to discuss your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at ethics@smu.ca or (902) 420-5728.

