For doctoral research:

Care, trauma and identity among late diagnosed autistic women with experience of sexual assault: Reconfiguring the traumatised self in society

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Distress Protocol

# Distress protocol for participant distress during data collection

Distress

* A participant indicates they are experiencing a high level of stress or emotional distress OR
* Exhibit behaviours suggestive that the discussion/interview is too stressful such as crying, shaking, stimming, withdrawing etc

Stage 1 response

* Stop the conversation/interview. ”I am noticing (state of emotion). Would you like to pause for a moment?”
* The researcher will offer immediate support. “Let me know if we should stop or anything I can do right now? Please let me know if you are ok to continue?"
* Gently query about state of mind: Would you like to talk off-record about any thoughts or feelings right now? Do you feel safe?
* Ask participant if they wish to continue or need time to evaluate. Remind them that this decision doesn't have to be made immediately. Listen and give them time.

Review

* If participant feels able to carry on; resume interview/conversation gently. Potentially in a different direction/topic. Be guided by them.
* If participant is unable to carry on Go to stage 2

Stage 2 Response

* With agreement from participant and confirmation this is what they wish to do, finish interview.
* Remind participant that they have full control whether to continue any form of participation and that they are also able to re-consent to continue at a later stage.
* Encourage the participant to contact their sources of support. Offer sources for support/advice and offer help accessing these sources.
* Follow participant up with courtesy call (if participant consents)
* Ask they would like to reschedule for another time or need time to

Follow up evaluate.

* Encourage the participant to make contact if they experience

ongoing increased distress

# Distress protocol for researcher distress during specific parts of the research process

* + The researcher should consider the potential physical and psychological impact on the researcher of the participants description of life experiences
	+ The researcher should consider how many interviews could be

# Pre data collection

undertaken in any given time period

* The researcher should be aware of the potential for emotional exhaustion

# Data collection stage

* Schedule regular de-briefing sessions with student wellbeing support
* Schedule regular reviews with supervisory team
* Encourage journaling of researcher thoughts and feelings, which will become part of fieldwork notes and auto ethnographic results

# Analysis

* + Consider potential impact of transcription of emotional interviews
	+ Continue regular scheduled debriefing sessions with student wellbeing and supervisors

# Follow up

* Researcher to access a research mentor if she experiences increased distress in the hours/days following any parts of the research process and require additional support

References:

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