

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

HREC Project Number:	HRE2025-0608
Project Title:	Monitoring Mood in Bipolar Disorder: An Art-Based Quantitative Approach
Chief Investigator:	Professor Warren Mansell
Student researcher:	Catarina Castela
Version Number:	Participant Information Form Version 2
Version Date:	17 October 2025

What is the Project About?

Research shows that art can reflect how people are feeling and may reveal underlying mood and psychological states. Monitoring mood fluctuation over time is key to maintaining a stable mood and improving quality of life. However, most people often find that the monitoring methods available today do not meet their needs, especially in the long term.

This pilot study of 5-10 people is part of a larger study that aims to develop an art-based Mood Monitoring Method (MMMET) to help individuals living with bipolar disorder or persistent problematic mood swings better manage their symptoms and monitor mood fluctuation. The MMMET uses a rating tool (MMMET-rt) to score things like how much colour you use or how much detail you include in your drawings, turning those features into numbers we can analyse. It also includes a short mood questionnaire (MMMET-mq) that helps track how you feel during each drawing. Together, these make it possible to see how your drawings and mood change over time, and whether those changes might reflect shifts in how you feel.

We are not looking at what you draw; we are looking at changes in how you draw. You do not need to be an artist to participate; stick figures and abstract drawings are welcome! The study will run for 3 months. You will be asked to complete at least three drawings each week in a visual journal and fill out a short mood questionnaire with each drawing. You can draw as much as you like in your journal, and your drawings can include scribbles, shapes, doodles or any marks on a page.

You will also be invited to take part in a one-on-one interview every two weeks, either in person or via video call. At the start of each interview, you will be asked to complete three short mood assessment questionnaires - the Altman Self-Rating Mania Scale (ASRM), the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), and the Generalised Anxiety Disorder 7-item Scale (GAD-7) - which will take around five minutes in total.

After that, we will talk with you about your recent drawings and your experiences over the past fortnight. You will also have the chance to give feedback on the study and the MMMET. These interviews can be as short or as long as feels right for you at the time. You do not have to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with, and you are free to stop the interview anytime. With your consent, interviews will be audio-recorded and typed up (transcribed) so we can use your responses in the study's analysis.

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Who is doing the Research?

This research will be conducted by Catarina Castela, under the supervision of Professor Warren Mansell and Dr Jason Sharbanee. The results of this research project will be used by Catarina Castela to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy at Curtin University and is funded by the University.

Why am I being asked to take part and what will I have to do?

You are being invited to take part in this study because you have lived experience of bipolar disorder or persistent problematic mood swings.

What will taking part involve?

If you choose to take part, you will be asked to:

- Create at least three drawings per week in a visual journal over 12 weeks
- Complete a short mood questionnaire with each drawing
- Take part in a one-on-one interview with a researcher every two weeks (either online or in person)
- The study is designed to be flexible and fit around your schedule.

Where will the study take place?

You can complete your drawings wherever you feel comfortable, such as at home or in any preferred space. Interviews can be conducted by video call, phone, or in person, depending on what works best for you.

What kinds of questions will be asked?

The MMMET-mq (the MMMET's mood questionnaire) includes:

- Open-ended questions, where you can describe how you are feeling in your own words
- Rating questions on a scale from 0-5, where you select how much you agree or disagree with certain statements about your mood
- In the interviews, we will ask general questions about your recent drawings, how you've been feeling, and whether the process is working for you.

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How often do I complete the questionnaire?

You are asked to complete a short questionnaire (MMMET-mq) with each drawing. So, if you draw three drawings a week, you will fill out three questionnaires. Along with three short questionnaires at the start of each fortnightly interview (6 interviews over 12 weeks)

How do I return the drawings and questionnaires?

If you are taking part in person, your journal will be photographed or scanned.

If you are taking part remotely, you will be asked to photograph or scan your drawings and email them to us or upload them to a secure online folder. The mood questionnaires can be submitted in the same way.

How much time will it take?

There is no time limit for the drawings; you can take as much or as little time as feels right for you. The short questionnaire will take around 5 minutes to complete, but you can take longer if you wish to give more detailed responses to the open-ended questions.

The one-on-one interviews will take about 30 - 45 minutes every two weeks.

There will be no cost to you for taking part in this research. You will not be paid for the time spent completing drawings or questionnaires, but you will receive \$20 for for each interview (\$120 total) to acknowledge your time and contribution. You will also be provided with an art kit and visual journal.

We will make an audio recording of each interview to focus fully on what you share and avoid relying on note-taking during the conversation. After each interview, the recording will be transcribed into a full written version. These recordings and transcripts will be stored securely on Curtin University's protected server and will not be shared with anyone outside the research team without your consent.

Optional Consent for Future Research

As this is a pilot study being conducted in preparation for a larger primary study and possible ongoing research, we would like to ask if you are happy for us to contact you via email about future studies related to this project.

This is entirely optional, and choosing not to be contacted will not affect your participation in the current study. If you agree, your contact details will be stored securely and will not be shared with anyone outside the research team. You will not be contacted about unrelated studies.

Are there any benefits' to being in the research project?

There may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this research. However, by taking part in this study, you may develop a better understanding of your own mood patterns. It could help you become more aware of what influences your mood, when changes tend to occur, and how to recognise early signs of a mood episode.

Your insight will help us understand how mood and mental state are reflected in the way people draw, and how this connects to patterns of mood in individuals with bipolar disorder. We hope the results of this project will allow us to develop a mood monitoring method grounded in lived experience that moves beyond traditional monitoring tools and fits into everyday life. Our goal is to offer a more effective, personalised, and accessible way to monitor mood and improve quality of life for people living with bipolar disorder.

Are there any risks, side-effects, discomforts or inconveniences from being in the research project?

There are no foreseeable physical risks associated with this project. However, taking part may involve some emotional or psychological discomfort. Reflecting on your mood, personal experiences, and drawings, or discussing these topics during interviews, may occasionally cause distress or bring up difficult emotions. We have been careful to ensure the mood questionnaire questions do not cause you any distress. But if you feel anxious about any question, you do not need to answer it.

To minimise this risk during the fortnightly interviews. At the start of each interview, you will be reminded that you may pause or withdraw from any part of the study at any time, without giving a reason and without penalty. A formal response protocol will be followed if you become distressed or there are any signs of risk. This may include stopping the session, checking whether you feel safe to continue, or rescheduling or withdrawing from the study.

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You will be asked to nominate an emergency contact when you join the study if further support is needed. A list of free mental health support services will be provided at the beginning of the study and will remain available throughout your participation.

Sometimes, just thinking about mental health can be upsetting. If you choose not to take part but feel distressed after reading about the study, you can contact Lifeline (13 11 14) or Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636) for support.

Who will have access to my information?

The information collected in this research will be re-identifiable (coded). This means we will collect data that can identify you, then remove identifying information from any data or sample and replace it with a code when we analyse the data. Only the research team have access to the code to match your name if it is necessary to do so. Any information we collect will be treated as confidential and used only in this project unless otherwise specified. The following people will have access to the information we collect in this research: the research team and, in the event of an audit or investigation, staff from the Curtin University Office of Research and Development.

How information will be stored?

Any digital information (like mood questionnaires, scanned drawings, and interview recordings) will be labelled with your unique participant ID code, not your name, and stored securely on Curtin University's password-protected network and backed up on a secure, encrypted hard drive. Only the research team will have access to your records. Audio recordings from interviews will be deleted once they have been transcribed.

How long the information will be stored and what happens at the end of the storage period?

Any information we collect in this study will be kept under secure conditions at Curtin University for 7 years after the research is published, which will then be deleted unless otherwise specified. The results of this research may be presented at conferences and published in professional journals. You will not be identified in any results that are published or presented.

Will you tell me the results of the research?

If you are interested in obtaining a summary of the results please contact the researchers after three months after the study finishes (this will be around six months after the study begins).

Do I have to take part in the research project?

Taking part in a research project is voluntary. It is your choice to take part or not. You do not have to agree if you do not want to. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, you can withdraw from the project. With your permission, if you choose to leave the study, we will use any information collected unless you tell us not to.

What happens next and who can I contact about the research?

If you have any questions or would like any additional information about this project, please contact Catarina Castela (catarina.castela@postgrad.curtin.edu.au) or Professor Warren Mansell (warren.mansell@curtin.edu.au).

If you decide to take part in this research, we will ask you to sign the consent form. By signing, it tells us that you understand what you have read and what has been discussed. Signing the consent indicates that you agree to be in the research project and have your health information used as described. Please take your time and ask any questions you have before you decide what to do. You will be given a copy of this information and the consent form to keep.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number HRE2025-0608). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.