

Study Information for the Study “Navigating Uncertainty”

Prof. Dr. Tobias Kube
Clinical Psychology and Experimental
Psychopathology Unit
Phone +49 6431 280-35645
E-Mail tobias.kube@rptu.de

Study Information „Navigating Uncertainty”

Dear prospective participant

Our research group is currently conducting a study to investigate **how personal life experiences relate to the way people interpret and make sense of ambiguous situations**. We would like to provide you with information about this study below and ask for your participation.

Purpose of the Study:

This study investigates how personal life experiences relate to the way people interpret and make sense of ambiguous situations. We are particularly interested in how people form initial impressions of situations and whether their impressions change as new information becomes available.

Expected benefits and risks of participating:

This study primarily serves to advance knowledge. It aims to a better scientific understanding of the cognitive processes behind interpretations in individuals who have experienced potentially traumatic life events. By participating, you help advance research that may ultimately help the development of more targeted psychological interventions for trauma-affected individuals. As a financial compensation, you will be paid £4.50 through Prolific. Further details can be found in the compensation guidelines below.

Please note that this study involves reading possibly threatening scenarios and questionnaires that might concern distressing content related to traumatic experiences. Reading these materials may briefly evoke emotional distress related to past traumatic experiences. If you experience distressing symptoms at any of the assessment points, you will find support resources available at findahelpline.com at any time. Even though no long-term disadvantages are expected, please do not hesitate to reach out to the study team, if you feel unwell after completing the study.

For your wellbeing, we ask you to refrain from participation, if you are currently experiencing an acute mental health crisis, such as acute suicidal thoughts, a psychotic episode, or a very recent traumatic event. If this applies to you, we encourage you to seek support at findahelpline.com.

You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time without providing a reason and without facing any disadvantages.

Eligibility:

Only people who have made **at least one potentially traumatic experience will be eligible to participate**. A diagnosed mental disorder is not required for eligibility. Further eligibility criteria are:

minimum age of 18 years and sufficient English language skills.

Study Procedure:

After reading the study information and consenting to participate in the study, you will answer two brief screening questions about the stressful and potentially traumatic events you have experienced. If you are eligible and decide to participate in the study, the procedure will be as follows: First, you will complete several short questionnaires about your current wellbeing, thoughts, and experiences. Next, you will complete a task in which you read short scenarios from every day life situations and rate the plausibility of four different possible interpretations of each situation. As you receive more information about each scenario, you will be asked to update your ratings. Finally, you will answer a few sociodemographic questions such as age, gender, and level of education. The study will be completed online through Prolific and will take about 20-25 minutes.

Compensation guidelines:

To ensure data quality, payment via *Prolific* will only be provided under the following conditions:

- The completion time should fall within a **realistic range**. We therefore reserve the right **not to compensate participants whose completion time is conspicuously short** (e.g., less than 10 minutes) or **conspicuously long** (e.g., more than 90 minutes).
- Participation requires conscientious completion of all tasks. Unrealistic response patterns that indicate **random or automated input**, or **unanswered quality control questions**, may result in exclusion from compensation
- Participation via *Prolific* is only possible if the following **requirements** are met
 - Minimum age of 18 years
 - You are fluent in the English language
 - experience of at least one potentially traumatic life event in the past
 - not currently experiencing an acute mental health crisis
 -

If it later turns out that one of these requirements was not met, compensation cannot be paid.

Voluntary participation and withdrawal:

Participation in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time without giving a reason, and doing so will not result in any disadvantages. If you wish to delete your data, you can only do so while you are working on the study by clicking "Leave and delete my data". Your data will then be deleted immediately.

Should you choose to withdraw, please follow the steps to receive your partial compensation of £1:

1. **Copy the following code: CUEFRGXM**
2. **Return to Prolific**
3. **Enter the code to confirm your withdrawal, so we can review and approve a compensation of £1 for your time**

Please make a note of this code before you proceed to the next page, to ensure you can receive your partial compensation should you choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

Data protection:

The data collected as part of the study will be treated as strictly confidential in accordance with data protection regulations (Section 40 of the Federal Data Protection Act) and the duty of confidentiality.

The data is collected in anonymised form. Due to the anonymised data, it will not be possible for you to delete your data once the data entry is completed. If you wish to delete your data, you can only do so while you are working on the study. The anonymised data will be retained for a further 10 years in accordance with legal provisions. Your data will be used exclusively for analyses within the context of the study. The anonymised results of the study may be published as academic papers and made available to other researchers for transparent review on the 'Open Science Framework' – with the socio-demographic variables removed. The data is transmitted via a secure (encrypted) connection and no IP addresses are stored. The provider's server is located in Germany. Once the survey has been completed, the data will be deleted from the server (by 31 December 2027 at the latest).

Responsibility for the proper processing of the data lies with the principal investigator (Prof. Dr. Tobias Kube). If you have any questions or other concerns, please feel free to contact the study director at tobias.kube@rptu.de.

We would also like to inform you of your right to lodge a complaint with a data protection supervisory authority.

Data protection supervisory authority

Der Landesbeauftragte für den Datenschutz und die Informationsfreiheit Rheinland-Pfalz
Hintere Bleiche 34, 55116 Mainz
Phone: +49 (0) 6131 8920-0
Fax: +49 (0) 6131 8920-299

Data protection officer of the university

Christiane Müller
Postfach 3049
67653 Kaiserslautern
Phone: +49 631 205-5698

Should you have any further questions regarding our study or are interested in the results of this study, please feel free to contact us. The contact details for the study management are:

Dr. Tobias Kube
Email: tobias.kube@rptu.de
Phone: 06341-28035654

B.Sc. Katja Straßburger
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
katja.strassburger@stud.uni-goettingen.de