CONSENT FORM

**Role of sensory environment in stress reactivity: Implications for pathological anxiety**

IRB Approval Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This Consent Form contains important information about the research being conducted. Read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate. If you have any questions about this research, you may contact Wendy Brooks (email: wb1127@txstate.edu), or the researcher's supervising professor and Thesis Chair, Dr. Alexander Nagurney (office phone: 512- 245-3165; email: an18@txstate.edu).

**Purpose of this Research**

This research is being conducted by Health Psychology graduate student Wendy Brooks (supervised by Dr. Alexander Nagurney), as part of her Thesis research towards a Master of Arts degree in Health Psychology at Texas State University-San Marcos.

**Why You Have Been Asked to Participate**

Your participation in this study is requested because of your status as a student of Texas State University. Because college students are required to engage in stressful, challenging activities on a daily basis, you are a prime candidate for stress reactivity research. The purpose of this research is to investigate how people like you react to stressful intellectual demands and how some patterns in this behavior may pose risks to your well-being.

**Procedures**

You will arrive in the research laboratory at the scheduled time and will be asked to complete a demographic survey as well as several questionnaires pertaining to the topic under investigation. This portion of the study should run no longer than 30 minutes. You will then complete a cognitive task using paper and pen; this task will not be timed but you should be able to complete it in less than 10 minutes. Following this, a final questionnaire will be administered as well as a brief assessment of your experience during participation. This portion should take no longer than 20 minutes, although most participants will complete it in less time. Throughout the course of the study, your blood pressure will be assessed using a digital blood pressure machine with an arm cuff. You may experience some minor discomfort from the inflating cuff. The total time for participation will vary among individuals, but it is estimated that time will be approximately 60minutes.

**Your Participation is Voluntary**

You can choose whether or not to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are not required to respond to any of the items in this study, if you choose not to. You may also choose to withdraw from the study at any time without losing your benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. To withdraw from the study after you have started, stop and alert the researcher. If you withdraw, your responses to questionnaires and other information will not be used in the data. If you complete the study and then decide that you would rather not have your data used in this research, please contact the researcher or research supervisor to have your data removed.

The questionnaire items vary in content and style. You might consider some of the information asked by the items to be sensitive or private. Questions will address several categories of information including a) how you feel, b) how you react in certain social situations, c) medication and substance use, and d) your cognitive and emotional experience during the present study. An example of one of the risk items would be “Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment: Ashamed.” Another example of a question, which may be private in nature is, “I am against giving money to beggars: True or False?” Yet another example of one type of question that you may encounter, which asks about private information is, “Are you taking any hormonal medications (e.g., birth control pills, patch, shot, estrogen, progesterone, Seasonique pills, etc.)?”

**Possible Risks for Participation**

There are no costs to you for participating in this study. There is a minimal risk of harm associated with the topic of the investigation. It is possible that participants may experience psychological distress by being present in a stressful environment, or by engaging in a stressful cognitive task.

Although, the likelihood of any significant, lasting, or latent distress caused by participation is low, if you experience distress as a result of your participation in this research, please contact a provider on the following list of professional mental health facilities available in the San Marcos and Austin areas. Although you would be responsible for the costs of private counseling services, registered students of Texas State University are able to receive free mental health services through the campus Counseling Center, though the number of sessions allowed may be limited.

Texas State University Counseling Center

LBJ Student Center Room 5-4.1

Phone: 512-245-2208

Email: counselingcenter@txstate.edu

Capital Area Mental Health Center

2824 Real Street, Austin, TX

(512) 302-1000‎

www.camhc.org

Adult & Adolescent Counseling Service  
123 North Edward Gary Street  
San Marcos, TX 78666-5756

(512) 353-7489

**Benefits of Participation in This Research**

1. Participation will result in a consideration of the ways in which one responds to stressful events, as well as the environmental influences which affect these response patterns. For some participants, this recognition may afford them more control over their own reactions to future stressors.
2. The results of this research are designed to benefit society as a whole by contributing towards a greater scientific understanding of environmental influences on stress reactivity.
3. Participants will also receive extra-credit for contributing their time and effort to this research by participating in this study.

**Extra-Credit and Alternative Options**

If you are participating in this research for extra-credit, the amount of extra-credit for participation in this study will be determined by your instructor. If you choose to not participate in this research for any reason, there is an alternative assignment option for extra-credit is available to you. You may receive extra-credit for research participation, or the alternative assignment option, but not both for the same course. If this research opportunity is offered in more than one course for the same student, then they may choose to participate in the research for only one of the courses. A student who wants to complete the alternative assignment option for more than one course should contact the researcher to make appropriate arrangements for multiple extra-credit opportunities.

Course instructors will assign different amounts of extra-credit for each course. The suggested alternative assignment is the critical reading of a scholarly journal article related to the topic under investigation as well as a one page critical response paper detailing your thoughts about and criticisms of that study. A description of the amount of extra-credit and instructions for completing the alternative assignment option are found via your course’s online website (i.e., TRACS) or other electronic communication such as an e-mail from your instructor.

. Once the deadline for participation has passed, the researcher will list names for the instructors to assign extra-credit. Only your name will be included on the class list for your instructor.

**Confidentiality: How Your Information is Used**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will be held confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by separating "contact" information used to assign participation credit, from the questionnaire and personal response data; both of these datasets password-protected and stored on separate, secured computers. For the purpose of collecting personal response data, participant numbers will be assigned. Identifying information will never be associated with the participant number. No one except the primary researcher and the members of the Thesis Committee will have access to the response data or the contact information list. The contact information and instrument response data will never both exist on the same computer at the same time. The researcher and thesis advisor will only have access to one set of data responses (contact or response) at a time to ensure that the identifying information is never paired with the instrument responses.

Lists of the participants and alternative assignment submissions will be submitted to the course instructors to assign extra credit. Other than submission to your instructor for the purpose of assigning extra credit, your contact information will not be used by the researcher for any other purpose. Your response/personal data will only be used for the purposes of research. All analyses of the study data, and presentation or publication of the results of this research, will not contain any identifying information.

**Data Records and Security**

After the study is completed, the researcher will store all the survey data on a secured personal computer that is protected with the most current security software and internet firewalls. After analysis, this data will be stored on a password-protected external hard-drive before being erased from the researcher’s computer. The external backup of the survey data will be physically stored in a locked file cabinet the office of the research supervisor, disconnected from the internet, and kept for a period of 5 years before being erased.

You will be able to request the results of the study upon thesis submission through contacting the primary researcher or the thesis committee chair faculty member. The results of the research will be made available to the general public by the end of the Spring 2011 semester through the Texas State University’s Alkek Library collection of Theses and Dissertations.

**Institutional Review Board Contacts**

If you have any questions about the research, research participant’s rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants, your questions or concerns should be directed to the Texas State University Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Jon Lasser at 512-245-3413 or by email at lasser@txstate.edu, or to Ms. Becky Northcut, Director of Research Compliance at 512-245-2102.

**Contact Information for the Researcher and Thesis Supervisor**

Wendy Brooks

Primary Researcher, Graduate Student

Texas State University-San Marcos

Email: wb1127@txstate.edu

Dr. Alexander Nagurney

Thesis Research Supervisor, Committee Chair

Email: an18@txstate.edu

Office Phone: 512-245-3165

**Statement of Informed Consent for Participation in Research**

Informed consent is an ongoing process, not a legally binding contract. You are not waiving any of your rights by signing this document. Please feel free to contact the researcher, her supervisor, or the IRB staff is you have questions about this consent document or the research.

*If you have read and fully understand this consent form, sign your name, write your Texas State Student ID and today’s date to indicate whether you agree with the statement that you have been reasonably informed about the research and that you consent to participate.*

***…***

I have read and fully understand this Consent Form before participating in this research.

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Participant Name  Signature Student ID Date

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Researcher Signature Date