**Consent Form**

Researchers: You are asked to participate as a volunteer in a research study in the Health Psychology program at Texas State University–San Marcos. The research will be conducted by graduate student Jondell Lafont ([JL1622@txstate.edu](mailto:JL1622@txstate.edu)) under the supervision of Dr. Crystal Oberle ([oberle@txstate.edu](mailto:oberle@txstate.edu)).

Purpose: The purpose of this research study is to explore whether effortful writing has any impact on people’s perceptions of weight. This study is an extension of other studies that found either positive effects on certain aspects of physical or mental health, negative effects, or no effects at all.

Invitation: The invitation for participation in this research study is being extended to approximately 200 Texas State undergraduate students who are between the ages of 18 and 45, because we are interested in body image perception of young adults.

Procedures: Participation involves 4 short sessions during a two-week period and 1 short follow-up session one month later. In the first session, which will take 50 minutes, you will first complete the Eating Attitudes Test-26 that includes 26 statements such as “I am preoccupied with the thought of having fat on my body.” For each statement, you will indicate how often you feel that way. Next, you will complete a body image questionnaire that includes 7 questions asking for demographic information such as your weight and ethnicity, and asking you to identify one of nine figures that you feel is closest to you, is closest to an ideal figure, and is closest to a figure that the opposite sex prefers. Finally, you will spend 30 minutes writing about a designated topic: your room (e.g., “Describe the arrangement of furniture, colors and textures of objects in your bedroom, and any other facts about your bedroom”), a traumatic event (e.g., “Write about specific traumatic experiences that you are currently having, experiences you have had in the past, or your feelings about these issues and how they have influenced your life”), or your physical appearance (e.g., “Write about your deepest thoughts and feelings about your weight, shape, appearance, or other physical characteristics”). In the second and third sessions, which will take 30 minutes, you will spend the time writing about the designated topic. In the fourth session, which will take 35 minutes, you will spend a final 30 minutes writing about the designated topic and then complete the body image questionnaire for a second time. In the last session, which will take 5 minutes, you will complete the body image questionnaire a final time.

Benefits and compensation: The main benefit that may be gained from this study is an improved understanding or better perspective about the effects of effortful writing on your life. If we find that such writing has positive effects, you may do this writing on your own in the future to improve your well-being. In addition, with consent of your instructor, your participation will be rewarded with extra credit points that are equivalent to 1% of your course grade. Further, all participants who complete the entire study will be entered into a drawing to win $500. Note that if you wish to have an opportunity for this compensation but do not wish to participate in this study, an alterative to participation will be provided. For this alternative, during the five sessions, rather than completing the procedures that are detailed in the preceding paragraph, you will read and summarize journal articles that address body image perception.

Risks and resources: The completion of this study’s tasks may result in increased self-awareness about experiences related to the topics of the writing assignments. There is a possibility that this increase in awareness may produce momentary discomfort or negative mood. Based on the findings from several studies that investigated the effects of effortful writing, the researchers do not expect that participation will cause any significant or long-term adverse effects on your well-being. As with all research, though, there may be unforeseen effects for certain individuals. Should you wish to participate in this study, you are not waiving any legal rights. Since this study involves psychological questionnaires and your own personal writing, it is unlikely that any physical illness or injury will result from your participation. If any harm does result, neither Texas State nor the researchers are able to give you money, insurance coverage, free medical care, or any other compensation for injury. However, should your participation raise any concerns about yourself for which you feel the need to seek professional help, you may receive confidential assistance at the Texas State Counseling Center (512-245-2208), which is free to registered students, though the number of sessions may be limited. If you feel that further assistance is needed, you may contact Austin State Hospital (512-452-0381) or Capital Area Mental Health Center (512-302-1000).

Voluntary participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without prejudice or jeopardy to your standing with the university and any other organization/entity which with you are associated. You may also choose not to answer any question(s) at any time and for any reason, and you may stop writing at any time for any reason.

Contacts for questions: Important questions about the research, your rights as a research participant, and/or research-related injuries should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Jon Lasser (512-245-3413 or lasser@txstate.edu), or to Ms. Becky Northcut, Compliance Specialist (512-245-2102).

Anonymous data and record keeping: All data will be anonymous. You will receive instructions on how to create your own unique ID so that all information and data collected will be completely anonymous. Also, all completed questionnaires and writings will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at Jondell Lafont’s house, and the signed consent forms will be kept in a separate locked filing cabinet at the same location. After 5 years following completion of the study, all records will be destroyed with a paper shredder.

Information on the study’s findings: A summary of the study’s findings will be provided to you upon completion of the study, if requested. If you are interested in the results of this study, please send an email to Jondell Lafont at JL1622@txstate.edu stating that you would like to receive a summary of results after completion of the study.

Having read this form and asked any questions you may have had, please sign below if you are at least 18 years of age and if you voluntarily give your consent to participate in this study. A copy of this form will be given to you for your records.

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Participant Printed Name

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Researcher Signature

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