

Consent to be Part of a Research Study

Title of the Project: The Impact of Minor Hockey Experiences

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Co-Investigator: Dr. Norm O'Reilly, University of New England

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To be a part of this study, we ask that you are an adult (minimum 18 years old) and are a past minor hockey player, having played a minimum of 3 complete seasons of OMHA hockey. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Important Information about the Research Study

- The purpose of this study is to understand the impact that minor hockey experiences have on players. These insights will inform the ongoing delivery of minor hockey programs, benefiting current and future players, parents, volunteers, and communities.
- This study is supported by the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA). While their support helps in reaching research participants, this study is fully independent, and your responses are voluntary and confidential.
- Identifying information will only be collected for the purposes of coordinating focus groups and providing incentives. Personal identifiers will be removed before any data analysis is complete or shared publicly.
- Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You do not have to participate, and you can stop at any time without any consequences. Your decision will have no impact on your relationship with the OMHA or any of its affiliated associations.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

We would like to hear from past minor hockey players about their playing experiences. Your perspectives will contribute to understanding what shapes meaningful hockey participation and will guide future program development.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to first complete a brief (5-minute) online questionnaire followed by a 45–60-minute virtual focus group with other past players. Focus group discussions will remain confidential.

How could you benefit from this study?

Participants will receive complimentary OMHA merchandise upon completion of the focus group. The information gathered will contribute to shaping future minor hockey programming that supports positive experiences for players.

What risks might result from being in this study?

The possible risks associated with participation in this study are very minor. During focus groups, researchers will do everything within their control to create a welcoming, judgement free, and safe environment. Participants will be reminded that they can withdraw from the study at any time and that they can choose to skip any questions that they are uncomfortable answering. If any participants experience any emotional or social discomfort or stress, we recommend that they contact ConnexOntario at (1-866-531-2600) or <https://www.connexontario.ca>

How will we protect your information?

We plan to publish the results of this study. To protect your privacy, we will not include any information that could directly identify you. Data will be analyzed separately from any identifying responses. We will protect the confidentiality of your research records by keeping all information in a private drive with access only granted to the investigation team. Your name and any other information that can directly identify you will not be saved.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary

It is totally up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you decide to withdraw before this study is completed, simply notify the investigators.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

If you have questions about this research, you may contact any member of the research team.

- Dr. Denyse Lafrance Horning, denyseh@nipissingu.ca or 705-474-3450, ext. 4319
- Dr. Norm O'Reilly, noreilly1@une.edu

Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant

This research project has been reviewed and has received ethics clearance by all participating institutions' Research Ethics Boards. Any questions or concerns about your involvement in this study (reference REB File #104283) can be directed to: Research Services, Nipissing University: ethics@nipissingu.ca.

Your Consent

Consent may be granted by completing the form below, or through the online pre-focus group questionnaire. By completing either of these documents, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. We will give you a copy of this document for your records. We will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the contact information provided above.

Participation Consent Form

I have read and understood the research information provided. I have been fully informed of the details of the study and have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I understand that I can withdraw from this study for any reason at any time. I understand that my confidentiality will be protected with the appropriate data storage and that only anonymized data will be reported and published. My signature below shows that I agree to participate in the study.

Name (Please Print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

By signing this consent form, I understand that I have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

- I agree to the audio recording.
- I do not agree to audio recording. In this case, a research assistant will take hand-written notes.
- I agree to video recording.
- I do not agree to video recording. In this case, my camera will not be used during the focus group.
- I agree to keep all focus group discussions confidential and not share any information disclosed by other participants.
- I would like to receive a copy of the research report after the study is complete. This report will be e-mailed using the e-mail address provided on this consent form.
- I would like to be contacted (via the email noted below) to participate in the follow-up survey of this study.

Participant's Email: _____

Thank you for your interest in our research and for your contributions to this project.