

 School of Social Work, Fredericton, NB CANADA E3B 5G3

**COMPANION SPECIES AND WORKPLACE WELL-BEING**

**You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you decide, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as you want so that you are clear what will be asked of you.**

***What is the research about?***

The proposed research will explore the nature of the human-canine bond, and its relationship to well-being in the workplace. The project seeks to generate understanding of this relationship so as to inform employers and policy makers whose decisions impact the workforce.

***Who is conducting the research?***

Dr. Clive Baldwin is leading the research. He is Canada Research Chair in Narrative Studies at St Thomas University (STU). The research has been approved by the Research Ethics Board of STU.

***Why have I been invited to participate?***

You have been invited to participate because you are a member of staff or faculty at St Thomas University (the research site) and are part of a human-canine dyad.

***If I am interested in participating, what should I do?***

If you are interested in participating, please contact us, indicating your interest and asking any questions you might have. You can do this by phone, e-mail, or regular mail:

Dr. Clive Baldwin,

Rm 313, Brian Mulroney Hall

St Thomas University, Fredericton, NB

Canada E3B 5G3

Phone: 506.452.9596 Email: baldwin@stu.ca

***What does participating in the research involve?***

In agreeing to participate in the research you are agreeing to take part in three interviews, to be accompanied by your canine companion at work for at least one morning or afternoon each week for the duration of the project, and three observation sessions where the research will observe you and your dog. You will also be invited to keep a blog/vlog/diary of your experiences of being accompanied (and not accompanied) by your canine companion

Each interview will be approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours in length. The first interview will explore your understanding and experience of the relationship you have with your canine companion, and your workplace environment, and set a baseline against which to identify changes over time. The second and third interviews will focus the previous six-months’ experience, plus reflection on the notes from observation sessions, and entries in your blog/vlog/diary (if you have done so).

Observations sessions will involve the presence of the researcher (or research assistant) who will simply observe you and your canine companion for an afternoon or morning, three times over the course of the project. Notes will be kept for reflection in subsequent interviews.

If you choose to do so, you may keep a blog/vlog/diary – all of which will be set up and provided for you by the researchers. You may enter thoughts, experiences or reflections as frequently or infrequently as you wish. While this will provide ongoing data for the researcher, this is not a requirement of participating in the research.

Interviews will be conducted in person and interviews would be arranged at a time and place convenient to you and are quite informal. Any out of pocket expenses (e.g. travel costs) will be reimbursed.

***What will happen to the information I provide?***

Interviews will be typed word for word (transcribed) and all information that could identify you (e.g. names, places, dates etc.) will be removed. The information will then be analysed and used in reports, journal articles, conference presentations and educational materials. All information will be edited so as to ensure that you cannot be identified (with the exception of audio and/or video recordings – see below). You will be able to see the transcript prior to giving permission for it to be included in the research and separate consent for this will be sought.

All information will be stored in locked filing cabinets and/or password protected computer files. All material will be destroyed after five years following completion of the research.

***Will the information I give be confidential?***

Yes. Only those directly involved in the research will have access to the information you give us. Transcribers and research assistants will be required to sign confidentiality agreements. All information will be treated in confidence, unless you told us about another person being harmed or at risk of being harmed or about an unresolved or future crime.

All identifying information will be removed from the information you give us. If you so wish we can send you a copy of the transcript for correction and approval before it is included in the research.

In addition to being asked to agree to being interviewed you will be asked also whether you agree to any audio and/or video recordings being used in conference presentations, for educational purposes, in academic publications or in interim and final reports on the website. ***This consent is entirely separate from agreeing to participate in the research and you can still participate in the research even if you do not want the audio/video recordings to be used in this way****.* If you agree to these uses of the audio/video recordings we cannot guarantee that you will not be identified from the recording so please think very carefully about this. Once again, you do not have to agree to this– we can work with the typed transcripts alone.

***What are the benefits of participating in the research?***

While some people find it helpful to talk about their experiences, there will not necessarily be any direct benefits to you individually as a result of participating in the research. The purpose of the research is to help understand the human-canine bond and its role in workplace wellbeing to help inform employers and policy makers in their decision-making.

***What are the risks of participating in the research?***

The risks of participating in the research are minimal. It is possible that some people might become upset when recounting difficult experiences. If this happens the interviewer will stop the interview until you are ready to continue or decide not to continue. You will be offered the opportunity to discuss this with the interviewer and the interviewer will help you access other resources if you would like.

***Can I change my mind? And what will happen if I do?***

You are free to withdraw at any stage without having to give a reason. If you decide to withdraw then all information you have supplied and can be attributed to you will be destroyed. However, once reporting of the research is submitted for publication, it will not be possible to remove any information.

***Will I be able to see the outcomes of the research?***

Yes, you can ask to be put on the list to be sent a summary when it is available. When the research is completed a report will be available on the website.

As the project is quite a lengthy one, annual updates will appear on the website. If you do not have access to the Internet and want to receive these updates, please let us know.

***Who do I contact if I have a question or want further information?***

Please feel free to contact us by letter, phone or email.

Dr. Clive Baldwin

Rm 313, Brian Mulroney Hall

St Thomas University, Fredericton, NB

Canada E3B 5G3

Phone: 506.452.9596

Email: baldwin@stu.ca

Website: <http://wp.stu.ca/narrativestudies/>

If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Chair of the St. Thomas University Research Ethics Board, reb@stu.ca

If during your participation you have any concerns about the conduct of the research or want to make a complaint, please address these, in the first instance, with myself. If you are not satisfied with the response, you may contact:

Chair

Research Ethics Board

reb@stu.ca