

Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study

Title of Study: Funerary Practices: Implications for COVID-19

IRB #: NCR202485

Principal Investigator Name: Sarah E. Wagner

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You are invited to participate in a research study under the direction of Dr. Sarah E. Wagner of the Department of Anthropology, George Washington University (GWU), and paid for by the National Science Foundation. Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. There are no negative consequences for choosing not to participate and you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time. Further information regarding this study may be obtained by contacting the principal investigator, Dr. Wagner, at 202-994-6075.

If you agree to participate in interviews, we will have an initial conversation to discuss the kinds of topics we are studying. If you are comfortable, we will then set up a time with you for the telephone or Skype/Zoom/WebEx interview.

If you are involved in planning a funeral or memorial service, we may ask you to allow us to be present during the funeral or memorial to observe and take notes. If you will be recording the funeral or memorial, we may ask you to share the recording with us for use in our research.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to understand how people are mourning and conducting funerals in the context of COVID-19 pandemic social distancing practices.

What are the reasons you might choose to volunteer for this study?

Your experiences can help us understand the role of media (such as virtual communication on the Internet) during times of crisis.

What are the reasons you might not choose to volunteer for this study?

Talking about grief and mourning can be emotionally difficult.

If you choose to take part in this study, what will you do?

You will *complete a survey that will take approximately 10 minutes* and have conversation about your experiences with one of our researchers. The total amount of time you will spend in connection with this study is *no more than one hour*. You may refuse to answer any of the questions and you may stop your participation in this study at any time.

Possible risks or discomforts you could experience during this study include: some sadness, given that we will discuss the loss of a friend or family member. Sometimes interviewees experience some stress about whether the interviews remain confidential, but we make every effort to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

For example, we give every interviewee a code number and pseudonym in interview data. When observing privately held funerals or memorials, we will not record identifying information during our observations. All private study data will be de-identified and any identifying information will be destroyed when the study is finished. De-identified data will be shared and used for future research.

You will not benefit directly from your participation in the study. The benefits to science and humankind that might result from this study are to understand death and mourning at a time of social distance.

Every effort will be made to keep your information confidential, however, this can not be guaranteed. When you complete the survey, you will not list your name. The survey will have a research number only. If results of this research study are reported in journals or at scientific meetings, the people who participated in this study will not be named or identified.

The Office of Human Research of George Washington University, at telephone number (202) 994-2715, can provide further information about your rights as a research participant.

Your willingness to participate in this research study is implied if you proceed.

*Please keep a copy of this document in case you want to read it again.