



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

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### **Choir aims to show how singing in harmony is key to mental health**

A unique musical project is seeking volunteers to join a choir that seeks to show how singing together improves mental health.

HarmonyChoir aims to recruit people who have experienced mental health symptoms as well as those with no diagnosed disorder.

After a series of rehearsals with professional vocal coaches, the choir will perform at Edinburgh's August festivals.

Experts will gauge how singing in a choir affects levels of anxiety and creates a sense of connection with other people.

The project, organised by the University of Edinburgh's School for Health and Social Science, seeks to dispel the misconceptions around mental health.

The first of eight rehearsals will take place in Edinburgh on 27 June. Organisers hope to have 60 people in the choir.

The performance will be in St John's Church, Edinburgh on 26 August as part of the annual Just Festival. There will also be a flashmob event during August's Festival Fringe.

HarmonyChoir builds on existing research that has shown that singing in a choir has a positive effect upon the singers' psychological wellbeing.

Clinical Psychology research assistant and PhD student Liesbeth Tip said: "If you have a love of singing and have always wanted to perform at Edinburgh's festivals, please get in touch.

"All choir members are equal, whether they have any experience with mental health symptoms or not. By taking part, you will help reduce some of the unfamiliarity and taboo surrounding mental health by bringing people in contact with each other through singing. But most importantly, it will be great fun."

To take part, call 0131 651 5167 or email [HarmonyChoir@ed.ac.uk](mailto:HarmonyChoir@ed.ac.uk).

The project is funded by the Innovation Initiative Grant programme, which distributes donations made to the Edinburgh Fund by friends and former students of the University.

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