



## *News Release*

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### **Soothing image bank initiative has mental wellbeing as its focus**

A bank of comforting images is being compiled by a team of academic clinical psychologists to help improve people's mental wellbeing.

Project Soothe, which celebrates its first birthday at the University of Edinburgh today (Monday, March 21), has developed an online gallery that will be widely shared.

More than 300 photographs have been collected by researchers after they asked people to submit an image they find comforting.

Feedback is being collected from visitors to the site about how they feel after viewing an image – and whether it helps them feel calm.

After collecting the images the team will do further research to establish which of the photographs are most suitable for use in future research and psychological therapies.

Researchers say that it is known that the ability a person has to soothe themselves in times of distress helps them stay well, but some people are less able to imagine a soothing scene – which is where a bank of images could help.

Since asking people to submit their images researchers have found common themes emerging – with natural landscapes and animals proving more popular than people.

Dr Stella Chan and Prof Matthias Schwannauer launched the project a year ago to investigate the interaction between imagery and how it makes people feel.

Dr Stella Chan, of the University of Edinburgh's School of Health in Social Science, said: "A soothing image can help people on two levels – a person may have an image which is linked to a memory, so the memory associated with the images helps them feel comforted. But on another level there may be some universal elements in images which people are more likely to find reassuring."

Submissions of images for the project can be made at <http://www.projectsoothe.com/>. Images can also be viewed on twitter @Project Soothe and facebook <https://www.facebook.com/projectsoothe>

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