

## The Men and Parenting Pathways (MAPP) COVID-19 Pandemic Surveys

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### PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

14 April 2020

We would like to invite you to take part in two special online surveys for participants of the MAPP longitudinal study. The surveys (one now and one in 3 to 4 months) will investigate how MAPP participants are adjusting to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Project Team Leaders

Principal investigator: Dr Jacqui Macdonald

Project coordinator: Ms Lauren Francis

#### About your consent

This Plain Language Statement contains information about the two special surveys added to the ongoing MAPP Study. The purpose of the statement is to explain to you as openly and clearly as possible all the procedures involved before you decide whether or not to take part. Please read this Plain Language Statement carefully. Feel free to send us questions about any information in the document. You may also wish to discuss the project with a relative, friend or your local health worker. Deciding not to participate will not affect your relationship with the researchers, the ongoing MAPP Study or with Deakin University.

In order to participate in the surveys, you must be an ongoing participant in the Men and Parenting Pathways (MAPP) Study. You will be asked to give consent to complete two surveys that are in addition to your regular MAPP surveys by completing an online form at the link provided to you by email. By providing consent in the online form, you indicate that you understand this information and that you give your consent to undertake in these special MAPP study surveys. You should keep a copy of this Plain Language Statement.

#### Purpose of the special COVID-19 Pandemic surveys

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unexpected and distressing situation facing the world today. The direct effects of the virus have been felt around the world, in terms of illness and life lost. In addition to these direct effects, many of the government policies and approaches for managing the spread of the COVID-19 virus have significant implications for the day to day life of citizens around the world. In Australia, we face a period of unprecedented social isolation. We do not yet know how people initially adjust to social isolation and stress caused by the pandemic; or what the longer-term effects of the pandemic may be.

We have added these two surveys to the MAPP Study to understand the impact of this major world event on Australian men aged in their thirties. The first survey will capture information at the early stages of the pandemic in Australia and the second will provide information on how participants are coping 3-4 months later when the community has lived for some time with effects of the pandemic. We expect that there may be ups and downs, but we don't know whether it will get easier or harder over that time. Collecting this type of longitudinal data will give us deeper insights into how people respond to stressful events and social isolation.

#### Procedures

Like your regular MAPP Study participation, the two COVID-19 pandemic surveys will be completed online. We have emailed you a link that will take you to the consent questions and the first survey. If you consent to both surveys, we will email you again in 3 to 4 months with a link to complete the second COVID-19 pandemic survey.

Each survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. We ask you whether you have been tested for COVID-19, and about changes to your life that have occurred since the start of the pandemic, the effects the pandemic is having on your life, and about how you are adjusting. Each survey will close four weeks after we send you the email invitation.

### **Risks or benefits of participation**

We do not expect there to be any direct benefits to you from taking part in this study. However, adding these surveys to the MAPP Study has several benefits for the wider community. We do not yet know the wider impact that COVID-19 will have on populations around the world. We hope that our findings will directly inform activities related to mitigating the negative effects of COVID-19, by directing health services where needed most, and understanding the ways that men would most like to access support in the future. There are no expected risks to you from participating in this study. The survey that you will be invited to complete includes questions about your life circumstances, wellbeing, coping strategies, stress levels, and your own emotional functioning.

If any questions in the survey cause you discomfort or distress and you would like to speak with someone, you may contact the following telephone support and referral services that are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

- Lifeline Australia: 13 11 14
- Mensline: 1800 457 870; [mensline.org.au](http://mensline.org.au)
- Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636; [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

### **Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information**

All information gathered from participants will be kept confidentially and will be stored securely on servers held by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and backed up on secure servers onsite at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. Identifiable information (i.e., your name and contact details) already collected as part of the ongoing MAPP study will remain accessible only to the members of the research team. All stored survey information will be re-identifiable. This means that your name will not be recorded with the survey data. Instead, your survey information will be allocated and stored using a special identification number. Only the research team will be able to match your name to your number if it is necessary to do so (e.g., to contact you to complete the next survey). We are required to keep information collected as part of a research project for a minimum of 5 years after the study findings have been published. The research information may be destroyed or kept indefinitely in a secure storage location after this time.

### **Ethical guidelines**

The MAPP Study including the two COVID-19 pandemic surveys are carried out according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies. The ethics aspects of this research project have been approved by the Faculty of Health Human Ethics Research Advisory Group at Deakin University.

### **Further information**

If you require further information, wish to withdraw your participation or if you have any questions concerning this project you can contact the researchers. The principal researcher responsible for this project is:

Dr Jacqui Macdonald  
School of Psychology,  
Deakin University  
221 Burwood Highway  
Burwood, VIC Australia  
Phone: +61 3 9246 8694  
Email: [jacqui.macdonald@deakin.edu.au](mailto:jacqui.macdonald@deakin.edu.au)

### **Complaints**

If you have complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact:

The Manager, Ethics and Biosafety, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125.

Phone: +61 3 9251 7129.

Email: [research-ethics@deakin.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@deakin.edu.au)

Please quote project number: HEAG-H 192\_2014

Primary Study name: Male psychological wellbeing during the peak age for first childbirth - The Men and Parenting Pathways (MAPP) Study



## Withdrawal of Consent Form

(To be used by participants who wish to withdraw from participation in the two MAPP COVID-19 Pandemic surveys)

Full Project Title: The Men and Parenting Pathways (MAPP) Study: COVID-19 Pandemic Surveys

Reference Number: HEAG-H 192\_2014

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the above surveys that are part of the ongoing MAPP 5-year longitudinal study. I understand that such withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Deakin University.

Participant's Name (printed) .....

Signature ..... Date .....

Please email this form to:

Dr Jacqui Macdonald

Email: [mapp@deakin.edu.au](mailto:mapp@deakin.edu.au)

Please note that because of social distancing measures in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, this form can only be returned by email. Project researchers are working off campus and will not have access to incoming mail.

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