

## Participant Information Sheet

### RESEARCHERS:

This research is being conducted by an Australian research team: Professor Bruce Smyth (College of Social Sciences, Australian National University [ANU]), Professor Jason Payne (School of Health and Society, University of Wollongong), Michelle Irving (College of Social Sciences, ANU), & Dr Genevieve Heard (Relationships Australia Victoria).

### PROJECT TITLE:

Post-Separation Parenting Apps: User survey

### GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT:

**Description and Methodology:** There is an increasing number of smartphone apps for separated parents to help them communicate and manage their post-separation parenting arrangements. This study seeks to understand whether these apps can benefit separated parents and their children, and which apps and app features have been found to be most helpful by users. We are seeking your views about, and experience with, these apps.

**Participants:** 500 separated parents who live in either the USA, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand and who use, or have used, one of ten popular post-separation smartphone apps. You have been invited to participate because you may be using, or have used, one of these apps. Several app developers, practitioners and social media groups have kindly agreed to help us by sending you an invitation on our behalf. We do not have your contact information and developers will not know who has participated or have access to your data if you do choose to participate. We understand that parental separation can be a difficult time and that answering questions about your separation can be uncomfortable or upsetting. For this reason, those who have separated recently (within the last 12 months) may prefer not to take part in this survey.

**Use of Data and Feedback:** The findings from this study will be used to make a free web resource for separated parents, and to help mediators, lawyers and judges make informed decisions about which app or app features might help particular families and situations. The findings will also be presented at conferences, and published in journal articles and book chapters. A short summary of the research findings will be available at: <https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/research/projects/post-separation-parenting-apps>. A summary of key findings (based on combined responses) may be provided to developers to help them improve their apps.

**Project Funding:** The study is being funded by the Australian Research Council (LP200100413).

### PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

**Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may, without any negative consequences, decline to take part or refuse to answer any question. Because the survey is anonymous, we will be unable to identify and delete any data you have entered into the survey.

**What does participation in the research entail?** You will be asked to complete an anonymous online survey about your experience with any post-separation parenting apps. Basic demographic information will also be sought so we can check that we have spoken with a diverse sample of app users. You will also be offered an optional follow-up interview if you would be interested in discussing the benefits and challenges of using post-separation parenting apps in high-conflict arrangements.

**Location and Duration:** The survey can be completed on a computer, tablet, or smart phone at your convenience. This survey will take about 15 minutes to complete, depending on your responses.

**Risks:** Most of the questions relate to the post-separation parenting app you use or have used, and whether you think a particular app has helped. Some optional questions relate to the use of controlling, abusive or violent behaviours through post-separation parenting apps. You may experience some discomfort due to the sensitive nature of some questions. A list of support services in your country will be made available...

**Benefits:** There is little information on the advantages and disadvantages of different co-parenting apps for separated families. An independent and rigorous approach to the assessment of post-separation co-parenting smartphone apps is urgently needed to determine if, when, and for whom co-parenting smartphone apps may be useful for managing post-separation co-parenting. This evaluation will benefit family law professionals and separated parents to make evidence-based decisions about which apps might best suit separated parents in different situations.

**Confidentiality:** No identifying information will be sought – the survey is anonymous. All information will be treated in strict confidence as far as allowed by law. App developers will be provided with a summary of the study's findings in case they would like to improve their apps but they will never be provided your individual data.

**Privacy Notice:** Australian privacy law requires us to tell you how the Australian National University handles your private information. You can ask for more details of that or how you can find out what information – if any – we have about you, and to fix it if it is wrong. If in you reside in a country in the European Union, the Australian National University processes personal data for the purposes of carrying out research in the public interest. The University will endeavour to be transparent about its processing of your personal data and this information sheet should provide a clear explanation of this. If you have any queries about the University's processing of your personal data that cannot be resolved by the lead Chief Investigator, further information may be obtained from the University's Data Protection Officer by emailing [privacy@anu.edu.au](mailto:privacy@anu.edu.au)

**Data Storage:** Survey data will not contain names or addresses or other readily interpretable identifiers. Electronic records will only be stored under secure password protected conditions at the ANU. On completion of the study, non-identifiable data will be stored with the Australian Data Archive under restricted access (for use by other researchers only with the Primary Investigators' permission).

**Queries, Concerns and Contact Information:**

If you would like more information please contact the lead Chief Investigator, Professor Bruce Smyth (e-mail [bruce.smyth@anu.edu.au](mailto:bruce.smyth@anu.edu.au)). Bruce would be happy to arrange a Zoom meeting at a mutually agreeable day/time to answer any questions or to discuss the study in more detail.

**Ethics Committee Clearance:** The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol No. 2021/557). If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager  
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee  
The Australian National University  
Email: [Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au](mailto:Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au)  
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