

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM



Plain Language Statement

Date: 16 November 2020

Full Project Title: Facilitators of and barriers to romantic relationship success in autistic individuals

Principal Researcher: Associate Professor Mark Stokes

Student Researcher: Ms Rui Ying Yew

Associate Researcher: Dr Merrilyn Hooley

Please read the information below carefully before deciding whether or not you would like to participate in this research.

You are invited to join in a research project, which aims to identify potential facilitators of and barriers to romantic relationship success in autistic individuals. This information will inform future efforts to support and enhance romantic relationship experiences for those within the autistic community. This project is being undertaken as part of a clinical psychology doctoral degree at Deakin University.

You have been invited to join because you are at least 18 years old, and you are either an autistic individual, or you are a non-autistic individual who has current or previous relationship experience with autistic individuals. Whether you agree to take part in the project is completely up to you.

This online survey will ask you a series of demographic questions (including your age, gender identity, sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, cultural or ethnic group, country of residence, education level, and household income). You will be asked to complete a number of questionnaires, including questionnaires about autism traits and personality traits, and a number of other matters detailed below. The survey may take 30-40 minutes to complete.

We are measuring personality traits that are involved in relationships. These include positive and negative traits. Examples of these questions are: "I see myself as extraverted, enthusiastic" and "I tend to manipulate others to get my way." These are important as all people show some scores on these traits, and we are measuring them to control for their influence on relationship success and draw conclusions about what may assist in relationship development.

At the end of the survey, you will be asked if you would be willing to be contacted in 12 months' time with a few follow-up questions about your relationship status. This follow-up survey will only take a few minutes to complete and is optional. If you would like to be contacted for the follow-up survey, please leave your email address when requested.

There are no foreseeable direct benefits to you as a result of participating in this research. However, your participation will contribute to our understanding about the factors influencing romantic relationship success for autistic individuals, which will inform future efforts to enhance romantic relationship experiences for the autistic community.

This survey will ask you about your romantic relationship experiences, and possibly your sexual relationship experiences. These topics may be uncomfortable for you. You may choose not to participate based on this information. If you become uncomfortable during the survey, you may choose to leave the survey (by closing the browser tab or window) without any consequences. If you experience discomfort during the survey, or ongoing discomfort following participation in the research, you are encouraged to contact your local mental health support services.

You can find a mental health support service available in your country at this link:

<https://checkpointorg.com/global/>

If you choose to provide your email address for us to contact you with the follow-up survey, your responses from the first survey and follow-up survey will be linked using your email address. This information will be stored in a password-protected register on a secure Deakin server and the register will be destroyed once we have collected the follow-up survey.

Only the de-identified data will be used. All data will be stored on a secure server and password-protected computer and will only be accessed by the named researchers on this project. The de-identified data will be retained indefinitely. The email address information that you provide to us will be destroyed after we have contacted you with the follow-up questions (if you consent) and/or shared the research results with you. The de-identified data may be shared with other competent professionals (upon request) for research purposes.

Participation in this research is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the survey at any stage prior to submitting your responses (by closing the browser tab or window). If you wish to withdraw your data after submitting the survey, this will only be possible if you have provided your email address for the follow-up survey. Please contact us at ryew@deakin.edu.au if you wish to withdraw your results. If you have not provided your email address for the follow-up survey, it will not be possible to withdraw your data once you have submitted your responses as the data will be de-identified.

Upon completion of the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter the draw to win 1 of 20 Amazon gift cards valued at \$20 (AUD). To enter the draw, please provide your email address in the separate link at the end of the survey. This will not be connected to your survey responses. Winners will be randomly selected and contacted via email. When we

email you, we will ask you which country you live in so that we can purchase the appropriate Amazon gift card and email it to you.

The results of this research will be included in papers for publication in journal articles, as part of Ms Yew's doctoral thesis. The results may also be included in other published papers or presented at conferences.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact Rui Ying Yew at ryew@deakin.edu.au

If you would like a summary of the results, there will be a link for you to leave your email address so that we may contact you. This email address will not be connected to your data, and will not be published or used elsewhere. We will delete it once we have completed the analysis and sent you a summary of results. This is also optional.

Complaints

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

The Human Research Ethics Office, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, research-ethics@deakin.edu.au

Please quote project number [2020-344](#).

By clicking the “Begin” button to start the survey, you are providing consent to participate in this research.