



Participant Information & Consent Form

Helping to Develop an Aboriginal Complex Trauma & Strengths Questionnaire

What is this project about?

This project is about helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Aboriginal) parents who may be feeling hurt from things that have happened in the past, to help them heal and raise strong happy kids.

Becoming a parent is exciting but it can be hard, especially for people who have experienced bad or hurtful things in their past. Memories about the past can be 'stirred up'. This can affect how we feel and make it harder to be the parent we want to be. However, having a baby is also a time to heal past hurt so that we can raise strong and happy kids.

Our Aboriginal researchers have put together a list of questions that we think might help parents to understand if they are experiencing hurt from their past, and to decide if they would like some support. We are asking parents to help us work out which questions are the best ones to use.

Who can take part?

You can take part in the project if:

- You identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- You are pregnant OR your partner is expecting a baby OR you are the parent of a child (aged up to 5 years old in SA or any age in NT and Vic)
- You are over 16 years of age and able to provide informed consent

What will I be asked to do?

We need your help to develop a questionnaire to help recognise important feelings of strengths and distress that may be related to past hurtful experiences (trauma). We will ask you to complete two questionnaires. Using an iPad or paper form, or via tele- or videoconference, a mental health care worker will ask you to answer one questionnaire that has been developed for non-Aboriginal people, and another health worker will ask you to answer a list of possible questions that has been developed by Aboriginal researchers for Aboriginal parents. The questions will ask you about your feelings of strengths and distress and about what keeps you strong. The questionnaires will allow parents to understand the effects of trauma so that they can seek support if needed, to be the best parents they can be for their children. The questionnaires will not assess people's parenting ability or skills in any way.

Each list of questions will take about 30 mins to 1 hour (up to 2 hours in total). We can meet you at your home, or at your local support service or community centre, or by telephone or videoconference. Both lists of questions need to be done as closely together as possible, preferably the same week. Some parents will be asked to repeat one list of questions again. This will help us to check that different workers can use the question list in the same way.

What do I need to know?

We will never ask you to talk about any personal stories. However, we will ask you some general questions about past hurt or whether any 'bad things' happened to you, and about feelings you may be having now. All questions will be read to you by the health worker.

You can choose not to answer any question. You can also stop at any time and you do not need to provide any reason. If you need any information or support, we can help you.



Photo by Kelly Sikkema on Unsplash

Why should I take part?

It is your choice to take part in this project. This means you can say "no". Some parents find it helpful or healing to think about their past. By taking part, you will be helping to better support other Aboriginal parents who may be experiencing hurt from things that have happened in the past.

To thank you for your time, we will give you 3 x groceries Gift Cards (one for the booking interview and each of the two surveys and a children's book. Parents who are asked to complete one of the surveys again will be given an extra Gift Card.

What information will be collected in the interviews?

In addition to the two lists of questions, we will also ask you some general questions, such as your age and your children's age/s, and experiences during COVID-19.

You can contact us if you want to see the information you have provided.

How will you make sure my information is safe?

This research is being undertaken by an Aboriginal-led research team based at La Trobe University and the interviews will be conducted, analysed and stored by the Aboriginal-led La Trobe University research team.

If you agree to take part, we will give you a special ID number. Any information you give us will be stored with this ID, and your name and contact details will be stored separately. You can stop taking part at any time by telling the service provider staff or the research team.

We will store your information in a locked cupboard within a locked office in a secure research office for up to seven years. Any electronic files will be stored in password-protected folders that only the research team can see. We will not give your information to anyone else without checking with you first.

Are there any risks?

We will not ask you to talk about any bad or hurtful things that may have happened to you. However, when you talk about your feelings, you might start thinking about the past. It's normal to feel upset when you think about bad things that have happened. Sometimes, you might feel that you are breathing quickly, that your heart is beating faster, or that you start getting sweaty, have blurry eyes, or feel a bit tense or 'on alert'.

Our team are trained to help you to feel comfortable and to support you if you do feel these kinds of things. We will give you information or support during and after you take part in the project.



Photo by Joey Thompson on Unsplash

How do I find out more?

You are welcome to contact the project team if you have any questions or worries.

Principal Investigator: Catherine Chamberlain, Associate Professor, La Trobe University via email HPNF@latrobe.edu.au or (03) 9479 8799.

If you have a complaint about the study, you can contact the La Trobe University Senior Research Ethics Officer on (03) 9479 1443 or humanethics@latrobe.edu.au

You can also contact St. Vincent's Hospital Human Research Ethics Committee on (03) 9231 2394 or Research.ethics@svhm.org.au

Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future – PHASE 3 PARENT CONSENT FORM

Completing this *Consent Form* is your choice. THIS MEANS YOU CAN SAY “NO”.

By signing this *Consent Form*, it means that you agree to take part and understand the following:

- Why this project is being done, what is involved, and any risks, as described in the *Participant Information Sheet*;
- That I may not benefit personally from taking part;
- That my participation is my choice; I can stop at any time;
- I have been given information and have been able to ask questions;
- That any information collected about me will be safely stored for up to 7 years, and that I can contact the project team if I want a copy of my information;
- That the ownership of my Aboriginal knowledge and cultural heritage belongs to me, and that this will be mentioned in reports about the project;
- That my information will not be given to anyone else, without my permission first;
- I have been given a copy of the *Participant Information Sheet* to keep;
- That any reports about this project will not mention my name (or information that would identify me) unless I have given permission.

Parent

I have read the *Participant Information Sheet* or had this read for me. I understand what is involved and I agree to take part.

PRINT NAME.....

SIGNATURE..... DATE (DD/MM/YY)..../..../....

Researcher/Interviewer

I have explained the research project verbally, including what is involved and any risks and I believe that participant has understood that explanation.

PRINT NAME.....

SIGNATURE..... DATE (DD/MM/YY)/..../....

