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**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT**

**Factors Influencing Wellbeing in Therapists Delivering Early Intervention to Children with Autism**

LTU HEC Ref: S17-208

Rachael Rankin, Cathy Bent and Dr Kristelle Hudry

Dear Therapist,

We would like to invite you to participate in a study that will investigate factors that influence wellbeing in therapists delivering early intervention to young children with autism.

**What are the study aims?**

We want to gain a better understanding of some of the factors that influence wellbeing in therapists delivering early intervention to young children with autism. Delivering early intervention can often be intense and challenging work, particularly for the therapist. Successful intervention is also often reliant on the quality of therapy delivery. Therefore, we want to better understand factors that impact wellbeing in therapists which, in turn, may influence therapy. For this study, we seek the participation of therapists delivering different types of intervention (e.g., ABA, ESDM, TEACCH), as well as therapists working in different settings (e.g., home or centre-based), to see if there is any impact on therapist wellbeing based on these factors. We will also be looking at other factors that have previously been implicated in wellbeing in early intervention therapists, and how these impact different therapists.

**Who is conducting the study?**

We are a team of researchers based at La Trobe University, with this study being conducted as part of postgraduate student research. All researchers involved are researchers at the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, with a background in autism research.

**Who can participate in the study?**

Anyone over the age of 18 years delivering early intervention to young children (aged 6 years or under) with autism within Australia is eligible to participate. Unfortunately, as this study is focusing on therapists delivering early intervention only, if you work with only older children with autism, or if you work with children with autism in other capacities (e.g., as a counsellor), you will be unable to participate. You must also be able to read English well enough to be able to understand this information statement and complete the questionnaire.

**What does participation involve?**

Participation in this study involves completion of an online questionnaire, which can be completed at any time or location convenient to you. The online questionnaire should take approximately half an hour to complete.

**What are the benefits of participating?**

There are unlikely to be any direct benefits to you, from participating in this study. However, we hope that you may feel a sense of accomplishment for having participated in this research which will contribute to the growing knowledge in this area, which is directly related to your line of work. Through gaining a better understanding of therapist wellbeing and related factors, it is hoped that employers will be able to provide better support to therapists, resulting in a better workplace environment for therapists, and hopefully improving their wellbeing. This in turn will potentially impact on therapy quality, with positive results for children and their families.

Upon completion of the questionnaire, you will have the option to go into a draw to win one of four \$50 Coles/Myer gift cards. Entry into the draw will be completed separately to the questionnaire (i.e., through a separate link), so as to keep all of your answers anonymous.

**Are there any risks associated with participation?**

Whilst no identifying information (e.g., names) will be collected through the questionnaire, this study does require you to reflect upon your wellbeing in the workplace, as well as how well you feel supported by your supervisor. This can bring up feelings of emotional distress for you, particularly if you are experiencing any difficulties in the workplace. If during the completion of the questionnaire you do experience any feelings of emotional distress, we encourage you to discuss these feelings with your supervisor (or another appropriate person within your workplace). Alternatively, you are encouraged to call Lifeline (13 11 14) to discuss how you are feeling and to receive support and guidance. You are also welcome to contact Dr Kristelle Hudry (contact details below), the research supervisor on this project to discuss any issues that may arise throughout the completion of the questionnaire, or if you wish to receive further support or guidance.

**How will the information be used, and how will privacy be protected?**

The results of this study will be used in the thesis of the postgraduate researcher involved with the study.

We also plan to present the results of the study in peer-reviewed journals, and in conference presentations.

One of the benefits of the questionnaire being online is that it is completely anonymous. Responses to the questionnaire will be stored on REDCap, a password protected data collection site. Even though all responses will be unidentifiable, throughout the duration of the project, data will be stored on the university network drive, in a password protected file. After completion of the study, data will be kept for at least 5 years on a password protected research drive. In the case where we seek to use this data for future research, only anonymous data will be used, and only with the permission of La Trobe University's Human Ethics Committee.

**What are my rights?**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are also able to change your mind about participating whilst completing the questionnaire. Simply exiting your browser will mean that none of the answers you have already provided will be saved. Given that there is no identifying information provided with the questionnaire, it is important to note that once you have submitted your responses, we will not be able to retrieve your data and remove them from the study if you change your mind about participating. It is therefore important that you consider whether or not you wish to participate before submitting your responses at the end of the questionnaire. You will be reminded of this, and should you decide you do not want to submit your responses, exiting the questionnaire will result in your questionnaire being deleted and none of your data used in the study.

**How can I participate?**

If you would like to participate, please follow this link

<https://redcap.latrobe.edu.au/redcap/surveys/?s=WFYJDRJ37W> , which will take you to the questionnaire. If

you have any questions about the study or what is involved, please contact the student researcher, Rachael Rankin – 9479 5649 or [rbrankin@students.latrobe.edu.au](mailto:rbrankin@students.latrobe.edu.au) – or the research supervisor, Dr Kristelle Hudry, 9479 5649 or [k.hudry@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:k.hudry@latrobe.edu.au).

Sincerely,



**Rachael Rankin** on behalf of the study team

If you have any complaints or queries that we have not been able to answer to your satisfaction, you may contact the Secretary, Human Ethics Committee, La Trobe University, 3086; [humanethics@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@latrobe.edu.au); (03) 9479 1443