

PARENT AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS DURING ADOLESCENCE

Plain language statement and consent form



TO: Principal

Plain Language Statement for Schools

Date: 21st April 2020

Full Project Title: The development of social affiliation during adolescence

Principal Researcher: Dr Nandita Vijayakumar

Associate Researcher(s): A/Prof Tim Silk, Prof Jennifer Pfeifer

1. What is the research project about?

Adolescence is an important period for social development, when relationships with parents and peers change considerably. This study is investigating at how teenagers share important personal information (e.g. feelings and emotions) with their parents and peers, how these behaviours change between early and middle adolescence, and how it affects their emotional health and wellbeing. We are specifically recruiting female teenagers aged 11-15 years to participate.

This project is funded by the Faculty of Health, Deakin University.

2. How are schools involved?

We need help to recruit families into this project! We are seeking your school's help to distribute information about our project to families. If families are interested, they will be required to contact us directly to discuss participation. Sessions will be conducted outside of school (online).

3. What will schools need to do?

We only need your school's help to distribute information about our project to families of children in Years 6 to 10! We will provide your school with information packs to send to families about our project, which includes an invitation letter to families, as well as the plain language statements for parents and adolescents. These information packs can either be mailed home (we will provide stamped envelopes), or emailed to families!

If your school is unable to distribute these information packs, we also have a flyer that you could attach to the school newsletter or other communications with parents.

5. Does our school have to consent and what if we change our mind?

Your school does not have to take part in this project. If your school consents to participating, you can also change your mind and withdraw at any time, without telling us why. Withdrawing from this project will not affect your school's relationship with our research team or Deakin University. We

have provided a withdrawal form at the end of this document, which you may use to withdraw your school from future participation (i.e. distribution of information about this project to families).

6. What will interested families need to do?

Families will be asked to contact us directly if they are interested in participating. We will explain the study to families, and conduct a brief phone screen to check whether families meet the inclusionary criteria for participation. If families meet criteria, the online assessments will be scheduled to take place at their convenience. During assessments, we will first obtain consent from families. Next, adolescents will complete a computer game that asks questions about whether they would hypothetically share personal information with their mothers and friends. They will also complete some online questionnaires on the quality of their parent and peer relationships, as well as their mental health. One parent will also be asked to answer a few questions about their background (e.g. age and ethnicity) and complete a questionnaire on their child's development, including their emotions and day-to-day behaviours. The assessment will take roughly 1.5 hours to complete.

7. Do families have to consent to participate and what if they change their mind?

Families do not have to take part in this project if they do not want to. Should parents and adolescents choose to participate, they are also free to change their mind at any time. They can also skip specific parts of the assessment should they not wish to complete certain tasks.

If families take part and change their mind, parents and adolescents can stop at any time without telling us why. Withdrawing from this project will not affect families' relationship with our research team or Deakin University. We have provided a withdrawal form at the end of the Plain Language Statement for parents. They may withdraw themselves and their child from future participation, and also choose to withdraw any data that we have previously collected from either of them. While we cannot withdraw data that has been used in scientific articles and reports that have already been published, we can withdraw the data from future publications.

8. What are the possible benefits?

We don't expect there to be any direct benefits to schools or participating families. However, we hope that what we learn will be of benefit for the next generation of young Australians. Parents and peers play a central role in all aspects of teenagers' lives. We expect this study to improve our understanding of how these social relationships change over adolescence, and how they support emotional health and wellbeing.

9. What are the possible risks?

Schools: We do not anticipate that schools will experience any risks from distributing information about our project to families.

Families: Two of the questionnaires that will be completed by participating adolescents are frequently used to study emotions and behaviours in developing populations. Some adolescents can get upset or feel discomfort at responding to sensitive items in these questionnaires about low mood or anxieties. To minimise the risk of adolescents experiencing discomfort, we will show them these questionnaires at the start of the session and give them the option to "opt" out of completion (either entire questionnaires or specific items). If we notice that an adolescent becomes distressed or upset, we will pause the assessment and speak them about how they are feeling. We may ask them if they are experiencing emotional problems in daily life, and whether they are receiving care for these problems. We will give them a list of resources that provide support to adolescents who may be struggling with their mental health. If their distress is deemed moderate to severe, we will also seek

their permission to speak to their parent about how they are feeling. Finally, we will give them the option to take a break, and will only finish the rest of the online session if they are feeling OK and would like to continue.

If we identify elevated levels of depressive or anxiety symptoms from an adolescents' responses to these questionnaires, we will discuss these concerns with their parent. However, we will not give parents access to their child's responses unless they specifically give us permission to do so. These questionnaires are not clinical assessment tools, and therefore do not provide information on mental health diagnoses. Rather, we will provide parents with a list of resources that can provide appropriate clinical help for their child.

Finally, we will also be asking parents to complete a questionnaire on their child's emotions and behaviours. Should they experience distress while completing this questionnaire, we will encourage them to speak to us about any concerns they may have regarding their child's mental health. We will offer to provide them with the same list of resources that can provide clinical support to their child.

10. What are the inconveniences?

Schools: We only require assistance from schools to distribute information about our project to families. Therefore, the main inconvenience for schools is the time required to do so. We want to minimise the burden on schools and will work with you to identify the best method to distribute information to your families. If you would like to mail the information to families, we will provide stamped envelopes with the information ready to be sent to families. We can also send electronic documents if you would prefer to email the information to families.

Families: The main inconvenience for families is the time required to complete the online assessment, which we estimate to take 1.5 hours. We can also organise online appointments at the most convenient time for them, including weekends or after school/work. We appreciate the value of their time, and will compensate families with a \$30 Coles-Myer gift voucher.

11. How do we keep the information confidential?

Schools: The involvement of schools in this project will be treated as confidential, unless we obtain your permission to disclose this information. We will also not disclose the involvement of particular schools when we write or talk about the results of this project.

Families: Any information we collect for this research project that can identify participating adolescents and their parents will be treated as confidential. We can only disclose their information with their permission. The only exceptions to confidentiality are if we identify risk of harm (to themselves or others) or we are required to disclose information by law. We will not routinely give parents or adolescents access to the individual information they provide as part of this study.

All information will be stored securely at the School of Psychology at Deakin University, and only members of the research team will have access to this information. Hard-copy documents will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, while electronic documents will be stored on a password-protected Deakin server. Keys and passwords will only be given to members of our research team.

The questionnaires and experiments completed by families will be labelled with a unique code number, rather than identifiable information (such as their names or contact details). A document linking their unique code to their identifiable information will be stored separately, and only the research team will be able to match names to the code number, if it is necessary to do so. We are required to keep information collected as part of this project for a certain length of time. Because the participants in this project are under 18 years old, we must keep information until a participant

turns 25 years old. We may keep the data for longer should publications continue to arise from this project, and will destroy the data 5 years after the last publication.

Finally, when we write or talk about the results of this project, information will be provided in such a way that families cannot be identified.

12. Will the school be informed of the results when the research project is finished?

If your school is interested in receiving scientific publications or articles arising from this project, you can send us a request via any of the contact details listed below.

If you would like more information about the project or if you need to speak to a member of the research team please contact:

Dr Nandi Vijayakumar
Email: p2study@deakin.edu.au
Ph: 92446892
SMS: 0499635894

Complaints

If you have any concerns or 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:

Human Research Ethics Office, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125,
Phone: 03 9251 7129

Email: research-ethics@deakin.edu.au

Please quote project number **2020-049**



PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO: PRINCIPAL / SCHOOL

Consent Form For Schools

Date: 23rd April 2020

Full Project Title: The development of social affiliation during adolescence

Reference Number: 2020-049

I have read and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I have been given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep.

I give my permission for (School Name)
to participate in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, or the identity and personal details of the school for which I am providing consent, including where information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

School Name (printed)

Name of Person giving Consent (printed)

Position at School:

Signature Date

Please post or email this form to:

Dr Nandi Vijayakumar
p2study@deakin.edu.au

School of Psychology
Deakin University
Level 5 Building BC,
221 Burwood Highway,
VIC 3125



PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO: PRINCIPAL / SCHOOL

Withdrawal of Consent Form

To be used by schools who wish to withdraw from the project

Date: 23rd April 2020

Full Project Title: The development of social affiliation during adolescence

Reference Number: 2020-049

I hereby wish to withdraw my consent for my school to participate in the above research project and understand that such withdrawal will not jeopardise the school’s relationship with Deakin University.

I WITHDRAW my consent for my school to participate in the above research project.

School Name (printed)

Name of Person giving Consent (printed)

Position at School:

Signature Date

Please post or email this form to:

Dr Nandi Vijayakumar
p2study@deakin.edu.au

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Deakin University
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221 Burwood Highway,
VIC 3125