

Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: The impact of social support on family quality of life and mental health in parents of a child with Autism

You have been invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important that you know what the study will involve. Please take the time to read the following information and feel free to ask any questions you may have.

Background Information

Raising a child with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) is a challenge for parents due to the unique behavioural symptoms associated with the condition. Receiving this diagnosis will alter the dynamic of a family, with changes occurring that impact the family's functioning. The role of social support is important in an individual's own psychological functioning and their overall family functioning. Current literature shows that families who have greater social support have better coping strategies towards the stresses that come with having a child with ASC.

What is the purpose of the study?

The present study aims to explore two dimensions of social support for parents of children with ASD: formal and informal, and how they impact family quality of life and mental health. This information is important as it will contribute to our understanding of how different kinds of support alleviate family stress of looking after a child with a developmental disability.

What will I have to do?

If you decide to participate in the study your eligibility will need to be assessed. To be eligible you must be a caregiver of a child aged 5-16 who has a formal diagnosis of ASC.

You will be asked to complete a consent form and some further demographic information such as household income and age of the child. You would then be required to complete three online questionnaires about your social support networks, your family's functioning, and your mental health in the last 2 weeks. This should not take any longer than 30 minutes.

At the end of the study, you will receive a debrief which will provide further details about the research.

Participation is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation and without your rights being affected. To do this you should simply exit the tab or window you have open.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

All information collected in the study will be anonymised at the end of each session by assigning a participant number. The data collected will be kept confidential and stored in password-protected computers at the University of Lincoln premises for a period of seven years. In the event that the results of the present study will be published, your responses will not be identifiable in any publication. You may withdraw your data from being used by our research team within two weeks of participation by contacting the researchers with your memorable word.

Participant Involvement

Participation in this research is voluntary, which means you can choose whether or not you want to participate in this study. Whilst there are no personal benefits to your participation in this study, we believe that the information you provide can make an important contribution to the research.

We will be happy to answer your questions about this study at any time.

Lead Investigator: Miss Ellie Woods 14562208@students.lincoln.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Niko Kargas nkargas@lincoln.ac.uk Tel: 01522 886861 Room: SSB3210

School of Psychology, University of Lincoln, Sarah Swift Building, Brayford Wharf E, LN5 7AT