

## PARENT EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

### Evaluating the Therapist-assisted Online Parenting Strategies (TOPS)

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### Invitation to participate in research

You are invited to take part in research being conducted by Monash University as part of Doctorate of Psychology (Clinical) research. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of the project, please contact the researchers via the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

### What does the research involve?

This study aims to evaluate whether an online program supplemented with a telephone-support coach providing parents with personalised information and tips on parenting strategies is effective in improving parenting behaviours and confidence, and in turn improve teenage depression, anxiety and sleep problems.

### What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Go online to <https://tops.partnersinparenting.net.au/> secure website.
2. Fill in the online registration and consent form. You will be asked to confirm that you have discussed the project with your teenager and that they agree to take part too. You will be asked to provide brief demographic information so that we can ensure you are eligible for this study. We will also ask you to provide a telephone number that we can contact your teenager on at a preferred time and day of the week. If you consent for both you and your teenager to participate, click on 'both my teenager and I agree to participate in this study'. You will be emailed a copy of the youth explanatory statement to give to your teenager.
3. Your teenager will be contacted by phone by a member of the research team from the Monash University School of Psychological Sciences. The purpose of the phone call is to discuss with your teenager the explanatory statement to ensure they understand and agree to take part in the research. Your teenager can decide whether or not to take part in the study when the researcher contacts them. To ensure continuity of care for your teenager, we will seek your permission to contact your teenager's mental-health care provider to inform them that you are participating in this study. No details about your program will be provided to your teen's clinician unless you request and consent to it.

4. If your teenager agrees to participate, the researcher will give you and your teen separate login details, and provide guidance as needed to complete an online assessment. The online assessment will take approximately 50-65 minutes each to complete and includes questions about your parenting of your teenager, stresses experienced as a parent, and different feelings and behaviours that may be related to your teen's depression, anxiety and sleep problems. Your teen will also be asked to keep a sleep diary using a smartphone app that requires him/her to keep a record of his/her sleep patterns over the course of 1-week. If you and/or your teenager report high levels of difficulty with your teenager's mood or anxiety, a member of the research team will contact you and your teenager to ensure that your teenager is getting the support that they need.
5. Once you have completed this initial assessment, a researcher will organise a mutually convenient time for you to be oriented to the program via videoconferencing (using Zoom) or phone. The orientation session will last between 45-60 minutes. We will ask you and your teen to complete the surveys again around 1 month after you enrol and completed an orientation session but before commencing the actual online program. The results from this second assessment will be used to determine the individualised parenting program that will be recommended to you.
6. At the completion of this second assessment, you will be provided access to the online parenting program comprising of up to 9 modules. Each module will be made available to you progressively, and takes between 15-25 minutes to complete, depending on the topic and the way you choose to engage with it. Topics will cover areas of communication, autonomy granting, limit setting, conflict resolution, supportive relationships, healthy lifestyle habits including sleep, problem solving and emotional coping.
7. You will also receive a Zoom session from a 'TOPS-coach' once a week until you have completed your allocated program, each call lasting up to 30-45 minutes. These calls provide you with an opportunity to raise any questions about the online modules. Your TOPS-coach will also present some supporting content relevant to the module and provide support with applying content covered in the module. You will also be asked to rate your teen's depression, anxiety and sleep problems during the calls. This program is not designed to provide you with therapeutic support but we will encourage you to identify and connect to an appropriate service if required. Sessions with the TOPS-coach will be audio-video recorded, for ensuring quality of care and for data-collection. Annotated content presented to you may also be screen-captured so that it can be provided to you via email as a reference source.
8. To see if the program is effective over the longer term, you and your teenager will be contacted again 4 months and 12 months after you first started the program, to complete follow-up online surveys (60 minutes each for you, 30 minutes each for your teen). Your teen will also complete a sleep diary on their sleep over the course of a week. These surveys will be delivered in the same format as the initial surveys.

All parts of this study can be completed at any time or place of convenience to you, as long as there is internet access.

### **Who is being asked to participate?**

We are inviting families living in Australia with at least one teenager aged between 12 and 17 years (inclusive) experiencing depression or anxiety and currently receiving treatment from a mental health service provider. Families need to have regular access to the internet to participate in this research. One parent and one teenager (aged 12-17 years) per family, with proficiency in English, are invited to participate.

### **Source of funding**

This research project has been funded by Monash University.

### **What if I change my mind?**

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to check the relevant boxes in the online consent form. If you change your mind at any stage, you are free to withdraw from the research (e.g. you may stop completing the modules or surveys). You may also request that your data (i.e. survey responses) be withdrawn once submitted, prior to the final report being written. After this time, you will not be able to withdraw your data.

### **What are the benefits?**

This project is designed to help equip parents with parenting strategies that can reduce depression, anxiety and sleep problems in their teenagers. In the longer term, it is hoped that the program will reduce teenage depression, anxiety and sleep problems. Participating parents may also find the program beneficial in improving their own well-being, as well as their relationship with their teenager.

### **Are there any risks?**

The risks of participating in this research are low; however we have identified the following potential risks:

1. Although unlikely, it is possible that you may become upset while completing the assessment or receiving your parenting program. If this happens, please let the researchers know, and you are welcome to withdraw from the study at any time. If you get upset or distressed, please seek support from a family member or friend, or call one of the helplines below:
  - ***Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)***
  - ***Parentline: 13 22 89 (8am – midnight, 7 days a week)***
2. There is also a small risk that your teen experiences a deterioration of their mental health symptoms during the intervention. To minimise this risk, we have requested that your teen remains in treatment with a mental health practitioner or under the care of a medical professional. We will also monitor for changes in your teen's mental health status over the course of your participation and encourage you to seek further assistance for your teen if necessary.
3. Although unlikely, there is also a risk to your privacy through breaches of confidentiality, particularly if there is a risk of harm to yourself or others that cannot be prevented without breaching confidentiality. If we believe that yourself, your child, or someone else is at risk of harm (e.g. child abuse, self-harm), we are bound by professional codes of ethics or required by law to take reasonable action to prevent this harm occurring, even if it means breaching confidentiality. If this is necessary, we will try to discuss the situation with you (and your child, if appropriate) first.

### **Reimbursement**

You will receive e-gift vouchers after completing the second set of surveys, when you first start your program, valued at \$20 each. You will also receive a \$15 e-gift voucher each after you complete the surveys 4 and 12 months later, to say 'thank you' for your time. Your teen will receive a \$10 e-gift voucher after completing the first two surveys and \$10 for each follow-up survey completed at the 4 and 12-month time point. Additionally, your teen will receive a \$5 bonus at each of these timepoints for completing a sleep diary twice a day, over 1-week for a minimum of 4 school days and 1 non-school day. You will receive Coles supermarket e-gift vouchers and your teen can choose between Coles or iTunes vouchers. Vouchers will be sent to you and your teenager separately via email.

### **What about my privacy?**

All information collected will be stored separately from any identifying information, to protect your confidentiality. Information obtained in this research will only be accessible by the researchers

named on the project. All electronic files will be password protected. All data will be securely destroyed after a minimum of 5 years from when the final report of the study is published. Any written reports will only include group data, and will not be identifiable in any way.

**How can I see the results?**

A summary of results will be available in 2020. If you would like a copy, please contact Catherine Fulgoni or Sarah Khor at [med-tops.coach@monash.edu](mailto:med-tops.coach@monash.edu). We also aim to have the results presented at conferences and published in scientific journals.

**What if I have any complaints or concerns?**

This project has been approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, please contact:

Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)  
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Thank you,

**Associate Professor Marie Yap**

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