

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Study Title: Benchmarking success, an evaluation of an electronic relationship education program for military couples (ePREP).

Researcher and Title: Dr. Adrian Blow (PI), Paul Lepley, PhD Student

Department and Institution: Human Development and Family Studies, MSU

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Sponsor: National Guard Bureau

BRIEF SUMMARY

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the research study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation including why you might or might not want to participate, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to discuss and ask the researchers any questions you may have.

You are being asked to participate in a survey that evaluates an existing on-line marriage enrichment program. Your participation in this study will take about 30 minutes at three time periods for a total of 90 minutes. You will be asked to provide information regarding your relationship with your spouse and psychological health. Your participation in the evaluation is voluntary. You can choose to stop participation at any time and for any reason. You may participate in the relationship education program without taking part in the research study.

The most likely risk of participating in this survey is stress associated with reflecting on your relationship and mental health.

The potential benefits to you for taking part in this survey is gaining a fuller understanding of your relationship with your significant other. Your participation in this study may contribute to the understanding of how electronic delivery of relationship education impacts relationship and psychological health.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The purpose of this research is to understand: how couples learn relationship skills, relationship determinants of psychological wellbeing, and to determine effective ways of improving marital quality within the National Guard.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO

During this project, you will be requested to complete pre, post, and a six month follow-up survey comprised of questions regarding your relationship and psychological health on an approved secure online platform. A select few will be requested to participate in a focus group lasting about one hour. We will conduct the focus group via an online meeting platform. You will be asked to provide consent at each time point, i.e., before completing a survey or before participation in the focus group. Participation is voluntary and not required to take part in the marriage enrichment program. You may decide to stop participation at any point during the study. You may also skip any questions or section of questions you do not want to answer. If you do participate, your responses will be kept confidential with your responses known only to the research team. Individual responses will not be used in any publications that may arise from this study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Little is known about the relational determinants of psychological wellbeing for National Guard families. Your participation in this survey helps us understand how electronic delivery of relationship education improves relationship and psychological health of participants. This information can then be used to help improve innovative ways to help families cope with stress associated with service within the National Guard..

POTENTIAL RISKS

Relationships can be tricky at times and when participating in the survey, unresolved issues may arise. These issues may result in heightened emotions, psychological distress, or feelings of discomfort during any point in the survey.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Your privacy is of the utmost importance to the research team. You will be asked not to use any names if you chose to participate in the focus group. Please be advised that although the researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of focus groups prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. The researchers will remind participants to respect the privacy of fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others. Audio recordings of the focus group and all survey data will be stored in an approved system locked by a minimum of two locks, and encrypted. The audio recordings will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed with any identifying information redacted. Your research data will be labeled with a unique code and linked with your spouse's responses. The code key that links your unique code to your contact information will be stored on an encrypted spreadsheet separate from your survey. Per MSU HRPP policy 4-7, records shall be retained for at least 3 years after completion of the research. The Department of Defense and State/Federal representatives may access these records to ensure regulatory compliance. All results from this study will be shared in aggregate form with no identifying information. All material collected will be stored electronically and protected by a minimum of two locks using two factor identification maintained on a certified system to protect personal identifiable information and meet HIPPA standards. The primary researcher will maintain control of all collected information if they move on to a different institution from MSU. De-identified summary information may be shared with MIARNG leadership to inform future marriage enrichment programs.

YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW

You have the right to say no to participate in the research. You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive. Again, your participation in the marriage enrichment program is not contingent upon contributing to the research.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY

The intent of this project is to improve the relationships of National Guard couples. Non-military, DoD, or Federal Employee, spouses may receive up to \$50.00 in gift cards for completing surveys.

RESEARCH RESULTS

If you would like to receive information on the results of the overall study, please feel free to contact the Chaplain (MAJ) Paul Lepley at 517.481.7935. Chaplain Lepley is a PhD Student at MSU who is working on this project in collaboration with the Human Development and Family Studies Department at MSU.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Information that identifies you will be removed from the survey responses. After such removal, the surveys could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from you.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher Paul Lepley: paul.a.lepley.mil@mail.mil, 517.481.7935.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT.

By clicking continue below you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.