



FACULTY OF ARTS  
School of Psychology

**Bathurst Campus:** | Tel: (02) 6338 4580  
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## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

### “Predictors of stress in parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders”,

This study involves parents of children aged 4 to 12 diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Autistic Disorder, Asperger’s Syndrome or Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified.

This project will examine the predictors of stress in parents of children diagnosed with ASD. Parents of children diagnosed with ASD report higher levels of stress and depression than parents of typically developing children and parents of other developmental disorders. Parental stress is associated with reduced effectiveness in ASD programmes and with higher severity of behavioural problems in ASD children. The aim of this project is to identify the variables that are the strongest predictors of parent’s stress. This project will be measuring the parent’s stress levels, the type of stress experienced, the severity of ASD of the child, the child’s behavioural strengths and difficulties, the child’s ability to empathise with others and the child’s social interaction skills.

To obtain the above information, you as the parent will be asked basic demographic information (e.g., age of child), to rate your child’s ASD severity and behaviours, level of empathy and social interaction and your level of stress and depression. All of this should only take **40 – 50 minutes**. **To participate, you email or ring me with your name and address on my contact details provided.** I then send you the survey with a stamped, self-addressed envelope and when completed you can pop it in the mail.

The risks associated with participation are minimal. Should you feel distressed during participation you are free to withdraw until the point that you submit your questionnaires. Withdrawing your participation from this project or non-participation will not result in any penalty or discriminatory treatment. (After this time your data will not be identifiable as belonging to you). If you would like to access psychological assistance as a result of questions in these questionnaires, the following databases can provide psychologists experienced in ASD:

[www.psychology.org.au](http://www.psychology.org.au). Follow the find a psychologist link.  
[www.autismspectrum.org.au](http://www.autismspectrum.org.au) have advisors who can assist online or by phone.

Your questionnaire answers are confidential and will remain **anonymous**. After the collection of surveys is complete, your name and contact details will be destroyed, and your data will not be traceable back to yourself. It is possible that our overall findings will be presented at conferences or published in journals – you will not be identifiable should this occur. Completion of the questionnaires will be taken as your consent to participate.



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Participants must be fluent English speakers and readers. Though participants from Aboriginal background will not be discouraged from participating, their data will not be analysed statistically as the tests used are not developed for this population.

If you would like to participate or require further information please contact Mr Ian Firth, [ifirth01@postoffice.csu.edu.au](mailto:ifirth01@postoffice.csu.edu.au).

Thank you.

**Ian Firth**      **and**      **Dr Rachel Dryer**

**NOTE:** Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Executive Officer:

The Executive Officer  
Human Research Ethics Committee  
Office of Academic Governance  
Charles Sturt University  
Panorama Avenue  
Bathurst NSW 2795

Tel: (02) 6338 4628      Fax: (02) 6338 4194

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.