

Consent Form

Title of the Project: Me, We, and Thee: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of the Targeted Parent's Lived Experience

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Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a divorced individual at least 18 years of age, who was married for at least five years and is currently two years post-divorce. You must live within the mid-west state of Indiana and reside in the Indianapolis metropolitan area or surrounding counties. You must be willing and able to make yourself available for two separate online interviews lasting between 1 hour and 1.5 hours each. You must be willing to complete both phases of the interview process within a two-week time frame. You must have lived experience as a targeted parent and be able to provide a rich, descriptive narrative about the lived experience of parental targeting. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to better understand the lived experience of parental targeting and the role intergenerational patterns of marital discord and social structure play in the formation of parental alienating behaviors. This study will also explore the effect of alienating behaviors on the relational well-being of targeted parents.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Attend the first online interview. This interview will last between 1 hour and 1.5 hours, be audio and video recorded, and require no advance preparation.
2. Write a short letter to either your alienated child, the alienating parent or to a legal or social service provider who was involved in the divorce/custody process. The intent of the letter is to express (to your subject) how the experience of parental targeting has impacted your life and your relational well-being. This letter will need to be prepared prior to the second interview. You will need to return this letter prior to the second interview and verbally share it with the interviewer. This letter is for interview purposes only and is not intended for actual delivery to the subject of the letter. You may also create and share any additional materials you feel provide insight into your experience of parental targeting. These items could include, but are not limited to, poetry, journal entries, art work, photos, or other media that help more fully express your lived experience. (20-30 minutes).
3. Attend the second online interview. This interview will last between 1 hour and 1.5 hours and will be audio and video recorded.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive direct benefit from participating in the study; however, participation will provide an opportunity to tell your story of parental alienation as the targeted parent in a safe, supportive, and nonjudgmental environment.

Benefits to society include better understanding about the lived experience of parental targeting, which could provide insight into the types of support services targeted parents need, increased clarity about possible future studies of families impacted by parental alienation, and increased public awareness of the phenomenon of parental targeting. A better understanding of the role intergenerational patterns of marital discord play in parental targeting and the effect of parental targeting on relational well-being are also possible societal benefits.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The assumed risk for participant harm can be compared to that which would be expected of a normal psychotherapy process. However, due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, care will be taken to provide any type of therapeutic support the participant may desire or need during or following participation in the study.

You will be free to take a break or immediately suspend either interview should you become emotionally distraught or feel unable to continue. Should you believe yourself to be in need of additional support services, a list of area counselors and treating professionals will be provided to you. Should you feel the need for immediate assistance, you will be directed to either the nearest emergency room or encouraged to dial 911 for on-site assistance.

Please note that under Indiana law each citizen of Indiana is considered a “mandated reporter” with a duty to report abuse and neglect of a child, elder, or dependent adult. As a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) and licensed addiction counselor (LAC), I am subject to certain limits to confidentiality and mandatory reporting requirements. These limitations include an obligation to breach confidentiality under the following circumstances:

1. If I perceive an individual to be a direct or immediate danger to self or others.
2. If I have reason to believe that a child, an elder, or dependent adult is being neglected or abused.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with another researcher. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Confidentiality will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms and by changing specific contextual details that could reveal your identity. All interviews will be conducted at a safe and secure location that will assure privacy and guard against any part of the interview being overheard.

- The interview platform will both audio and video record both interviews. All collected data including written, recorded, and observed will be securely stored on a password-locked computer. The researcher's office is fitted with a professional security system to ensure against any unauthorized access to stored data.
- Hard copy, textual data will be stored in locked file cabinets at the researcher's office, which will be protected by both on-site and off-site security. All computer-generated files and data, video, and audio recordings will be maintained on an encrypted, external hard-drive to avoid any opportunity for cloud or internet security failures or "hacks." All data will be securely maintained for a period of three years after which the data will be shredded or destroyed in a confidential manner.
- Audio recordings will be transcribed and stored on a secure, external hard drive. This hard-drive will only be accessible to the researcher via a password secured computer. All audio recording, video recording, transcribed data and observational data will be shredded or destroyed after a period of three years.
- Confidentiality will be limited only to the extent demanded by Indiana law and mandated reporting requirements.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Teresa M. Walters. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at (317) 760-0604 or twalters13@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Brian Pinzer, at bpinzer@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date