

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

**Title of study:** Counselling and Therapy for Men Experiencing Infertility: Therapist Perspectives

**Name of Researcher:** Ian Watts

### **1. Invitation paragraph**

You are being invited to take part in a research project exploring the perspectives of therapists working with male clients experiencing infertility either individually or as part of a couple. This is for my MSc Dissertation in Counselling and Psychotherapy. Before deciding whether to participate, please take time (at least 48 hours is recommended) to read the following information carefully to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Feel free to discuss this project with others before making your decision. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact the researcher at [I.W.Watts@edu.salford.ac.uk](mailto:I.W.Watts@edu.salford.ac.uk).

### **2. What is the purpose of the study?**

This study aims to explore therapists' experiences and perspectives when working with male clients facing infertility. By understanding these therapeutic processes, the research seeks to provide insights that may help enhance counselling practices and address the unique needs of male clients dealing with infertility.

### **3. Why have I been invited to take part?**

You have been invited to participate because you are a qualified therapist with at least two years of experience working with clients on fertility-related issues, specifically male infertility. This study focuses on gaining insights from experienced professionals in this area.

### **4. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. When you are participating, if you change your mind you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and there will not be any negative consequences. You can request a copy of the information sheet by contacting the researcher.

### **5. What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview lasting approximately 60-90 minutes. The interview can be conducted online via a secure platform (MS Teams) or in person at Salford University, depending on your preference and availability. **Please note that the interview will be audio-recorded** to ensure accurate transcription and analysis of the data. The recording will be securely stored and will only be accessible to the researcher and supervisor.

The interview will explore your experiences, challenges, and strategies as a therapist working with male clients facing infertility. Topics will include your perspectives on masculinity, identity, and emotional regulation in the context of infertility counselling. The interview will focus on understanding how you navigate these complex themes and what therapeutic approaches you find most effective.

The questions are designed to guide a reflective conversation, allowing you to share your insights and experiences. You are encouraged to respond in as much detail as you feel comfortable, but you are also free to skip any questions if you do not wish to answer them. Additionally, you may take breaks during the interview if needed, and you can withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason.

Following the interview, a short debriefing session will allow you to reflect on your experience, raise any further thoughts, and ask any questions.

#### **6. Expenses and payments?**

No reimbursements or incentives will be given to participants for taking part in this study.

#### **7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

The study may involve discussing potentially sensitive topics related to your therapeutic work with male clients facing infertility, which could evoke emotional responses or reflections on past experiences. However, as a qualified therapist, you may be familiar with reflective practices, and you are encouraged to pause or take breaks as needed. A debrief will be conducted at the end of the interview, and you may use your clinical supervision to explore any residual concerns.

#### **8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While the study may not offer direct benefits to you, your participation will contribute to a deeper understanding of therapeutic practices with men experiencing infertility. This knowledge may benefit the wider counselling and psychotherapy field by highlighting effective strategies and identifying areas for improvement in support services for men. We are a University and so it is part of our reason for being that we advance knowledge through research as well as through teaching. Your participation in this research helps us to do that.

#### **9. What if there is a problem?**

If you have concerns regarding any aspect of the study, you may contact the researcher at [[I.W.Watts@edu.salford.ac.uk](mailto:I.W.Watts@edu.salford.ac.uk)].

For additional support, you may reach out to the research supervisor, [Phil Eva, [P.K.Eva@salford.ac.uk](mailto:P.K.Eva@salford.ac.uk) ].

If the matter is still not resolved, please forward your concerns to Dr Linda Dubrow-Marshall, Co-Chair of the Health Taught Ethics Panel [l.dubrow-marshall@salford.ac.uk](mailto:l.dubrow-marshall@salford.ac.uk), or Dr Anna Cooper-Ryan, Co-Chair of the Health Taught Ethics Panel [a.m.cooper-ryan@salford.ac.uk](mailto:a.m.cooper-ryan@salford.ac.uk).

#### **10. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

All information collected will be kept strictly confidential. Any names or identifying details (such as location names or specific organisations) mentioned in interviews will be removed from transcripts to maintain anonymity. Data will be anonymised using participant ID codes, which will allow participants to request data withdrawal if desired. All data will be securely stored on the University of Salford's secure server (OneDrive) and retained for five years in line with research data retention policies. After this period, all data will be securely deleted.

Please note that your anonymised data (including any personal data and special categories of personal data processed according to conditions of article 6 (paragraph 1(a)) and article 9 (paragraphs 2(a) and 2(j)) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 respectively) will be used in the researcher's data analysis and dissertation as part of a postgraduate degree course, and potentially in any related publications or conference presentations. Here is the link to the

University's Research Privacy Notice that sets out details about the University's processing of personal information for research purposes:

<https://www.salford.ac.uk/privacy/introduction/research-privacy-notice>

**11. What will happen if I don't carry on with the study?**

You may withdraw from the study at any point during the interview without providing a reason. If you choose to withdraw, all data collected up to that point will be destroyed. Additionally, you may request data removal within two weeks after the date of your interview by emailing the researcher with your participant ID code.

If you wish to withdraw from the study, please email the [I.W.Watts@edu.salford.ac.uk](mailto:I.W.Watts@edu.salford.ac.uk) with your participant ID code to request for your data to be removed.

**12. What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of this study will form part of the researcher's MSc dissertation at the University of Salford and may be shared in future academic publications, articles and/or conference presentations.

**13. Who is organising or sponsoring the research?**

This research is being conducted as part of the MSc in Counselling and Psychotherapy at the University of Salford.

**14. Further information and contact details:**

If you have any further questions, please contact:

[I.W.Watts@edu.salford.ac.uk](mailto:I.W.Watts@edu.salford.ac.uk)

If you experience any distress after participating, you may seek support from the following resources:

- BACP Helpline: 01455 883300 or [gethelp@BACP.co.uk](mailto:gethelp@BACP.co.uk)
- Mind (mental health charity): [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM): 0800 585858
- NHS 111 Mental Health Line: Call 111 and select the mental health option for 24/7 advice and support <https://111.nhs.uk/triage/check-your-mental-health-symptoms>