

# Permission to Take Part in a Human Research Study

**Title of the Study:** Best Marriage Ever

**Principal Investigator:** Cynthia Wilson Ph.D., Executive Director, Florida Center for Prevention Research, Florida State University

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Please find below information about this research for you to think about before you decide to take part. Ask us if you have any questions about this information or the research before you decide to take part.

## Key Information for You to Consider

**Statement of the Research Study.** You are being invited to volunteer to take part in our research study. It is up to you whether you choose to take part or not. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to you if you choose not to take part or decide later not to take part.

**Purpose.** The reason that we are doing this research is to study the effectiveness of various marriage programs to determine which programs have the greatest impact on healthy marriage skills and marital success over time.

**Duration.** We think that taking part in our study will last the 12 hours that are required for session attendance, as well as approximately 20 minutes for each follow-up survey which will occur 1 month and 6 months after the program ends.

**Research Activities.** You will be asked to attend a marriage program over the course of 12 hours. At the first session you will be asked to complete an Applicant Characteristic Survey and an Entry survey and at the end of the last sessions you will be asked to complete an Exit survey. You will then be asked to complete a series of follow-up surveys at 1 month and 6 months after the program ends.

**Risks:** The risks or discomforts to you of taking part in this study are minimal. Some questions about your marriage may be uncomfortable. All information is kept confidential and will be stored in a secure system; the team evaluating the data will not have any access to any information that could be used to identify you.

**Benefits:** As a result of taking part in this research, we think that you may experience positive enhancements to your own marriage. You will receive monetary incentives in the form of Amazon egift cards for participating in the program and completing surveys. You may also be able to provide support for future funded marriage education by providing evidence that a program actually creates lasting benefits for couples. This information could allow instructors to offer programs that will decrease divorce rates, build skills for couples, and create overall happier and healthier families.

## What is this study about?

Researchers at The Florida Center for Prevention Research at Florida State University are studying the impact of marriage education in community settings and military bases. Researchers are interested in finding out if certain marriage programs provide lasting benefits for married couples. You are invited to take part in the study because you are married and are over the age of 18. You are one of 1560 persons to take part in this study. Your involvement in the study is expected to last 7 months total. The study is supported by the Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau who is funding this research.

## What will happen during this research?

If you agree to be in this research, your participation will include:

- Being randomly assigned to one of three marriage curricula:
  - *Art of Marriage*, a biblically-based marriage program
  - *Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage*, a comedic approach to marriage enrichment with biblical references, or
  - *Adventures in Marriage*, a skills-based marriage education program

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- Completing an Applicant Characteristic Survey, which will ask questions regarding marital status, parent status, financial and demographic information such as age, race, etc.
- Completing a two-part Entry Survey, which will ask questions required by the Administration for Children and Families, as well as an entry questionnaire created to better understand your marital satisfaction.
- Attending at least 90% of the 12-hour marriage program to which you have been randomly assigned. If you are unable to attend a session, you may be asked to complete a make-up session.
- Completing a two-part Exit Survey, which will ask questions required by the Administration for Children and Families, as well as an exit questionnaire created to better understand your marital satisfaction.
- Couples who complete all 12 hours of the marriage program and complete all surveys at program entry and exit will receive a monetary incentive.
- Completing a series of follow-up surveys after you complete the marriage program at 1 month and 6 months after program completion. Each partner will receive a monetary incentive for completing these surveys.

We will tell you about any new information that may affect your willingness to continue to take part in this research. You may not be made aware of some features about the study, such as its exact purpose, study questions and materials, or your responses that we would like to collect. At the end of your participation in this study or if you withdraw from this study, we will provide you with additional information.

### What will you do to protect my privacy?

The results of the study may be published or presented, but no information that may identify you will ever be provided or released in publications or presentations. We will take steps to protect your privacy and confidentiality. These steps include only storing private information in the data collection portal which is approved for confidential data collection. Each client will have a randomly generated client ID which will link your responses to follow-up surveys rather than attaching your responses to your name or any other personally identifiable information. Despite taking steps to protect your privacy or the confidentiality of your identifiable information, we cannot guarantee that your privacy or confidentiality will be protected. For example, if you tell us something that makes us believe that you or others have been or may be physically harmed, we may need to report that information to the appropriate agencies.

Individuals and organizations responsible for conducting or monitoring this research may be permitted access to and inspect the research records. This includes the Florida State University Institutional Review Board (FSU IRB), which reviewed this study. Program staff from Live the Life and the Evaluation team at the Florida Center for Prevention Research will have access to varying levels of client data or responses. Live the Life will have access to client records such as name and phone number in order to contact clients regarding attendance to sessions or follow-up surveys. The evaluation team at The Florida Center for Prevention Research will not have access to your personal information but will be able to access survey responses for analyzing the data for the research study. Any de-identified data that is collected throughout the duration of this study will be archived indefinitely for research purposes, but your personal information will not be shared. For more information please see the Privacy Act, attached.

Any information you provide will be de-identified before being used for research purposes such as analysis or publication. The only item that will be used to link your surveys is the confidential client ID, which uses no personally identifiable information. Other information in the follow-up surveys will be used to link your surveys across data collection points (e.g., session ID and anniversary date), but no personally identifiable information will be asked on those surveys.

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### **What are the risks of harms or discomforts associated with this research?**

The risks of harms or discomforts associated with the research are considered minimal. It may be uncomfortable to share details regarding your personal life and marriage quality, however all data will be kept confidential, unless the program staff suspects you are at risk of harm, in which case mandatory reporting laws require you be referred to the proper agency.

### **How might I benefit from this research?**

Personal benefits you may get from this study are enhanced marital quality including:

- Improved healthy relationship and marriage skills
- Improved family structure stability
- Increase in marriage rate
- Improved family functioning and improved adult well-being

### **What is the compensation for the research?**

If you agree to take part in this research study, you and your partner will be provided with one \$50 Amazon egift card for attending all 12 program hours as a couple and completing all entry and exit surveys. An incentive for each follow-up survey will also be provided at a rate of a \$20 Amazon egift card per couple for completion of the 1-month and a \$70 Amazon egift card per couple for completion of the 6-month follow-up survey for your time and effort. Both you and your partner must complete the follow-up survey at each round to qualify for each incentive.

### **What will happen if I choose not to participate?**

It is your choice to participate or not to participate in this research. Alternatives to participation are attending a different marriage education class offered by Live the Life that is not a part of the research study or not participating in any way.

### **Is my participation voluntary, and can I withdraw?**

Taking part in this research study is your decision. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study, but if you do, you can stop at any time. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your relationship with your church, military base, Live the Life or Florida State University. There are no penalty/consequences/loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, if you do not participate. You have the right to choose not to participate in any study activity or completely withdraw from continued participation at any point in this study without penalty/consequences/loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, the data collected to the point of withdrawal will be kept for data collection measures.

### **Can I be removed from the research without my OK?**

We may remove you from the research study without your approval. Reasons we would do this would be if during services, program staff determines that you and your partner require additional services in order to maintain your safety. In this case you would be referred to the appropriate agency.

### **Who do I talk to if I have questions?**

If you have questions, concerns, or have experienced a research-related injury, contact the research team at: Dr. Cynthia Wilson, [cbwilson2@fsu.edu](mailto:cbwilson2@fsu.edu)

The Florida State University Institutional Review Board ("IRB") is overseeing this research. The FSU IRB is a group of people who perform official independent review of research studies before studies begin to ensure that the rights

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and welfare of participants are protected. If you have questions about your rights or wish to speak with someone other than the research team, you may contact:

Florida State University IRB  
2010 Levy Drive, Suite 276  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306  
850-644-7900  
humansubjects@fsu.edu

### STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read and considered the information presented in this form. I confirm that I understand the purpose of the research and the study procedures. I understand that I may ask questions at any time and can withdraw my participation without prejudice. I have read this consent form. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study.

I consent to participate in this study.

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Printed Name of Adult Participant

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Signature of Adult Participant

Date

### Researcher's Signature

I have fully explained the research study described by this form. I have answered the participant and/or parent/guardians' questions and will answer any future questions to the best of my ability. I will tell the family and/or the person taking part in this research of any changes in the procedures or in the possible harms/possible benefits of the study that may affect their health or their willingness to stay in the study.

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Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

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Signature of Research Team Member

Date

# Privacy Act Statement

**The Privacy Act of 1974 establishes practices to help ensure the confidentiality of individuals and their personally identifiable information. For the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) programs, this means that HMRF program staff will offer all clients the opportunity to review a description of their privacy rights at enrollment to the program, before taking client surveys, and when personal information is requested during service contacts. Following is the description of privacy rights for all clients in HMRF programs. Please raise any questions you have about your rights with HMRF program staff.**

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Thank you for participating in this program. Throughout the program we will ask you to provide information so that we can better support you and to help monitor the program's performance. We hope you will answer all the questions asked by program staff or in surveys, but you may skip any questions you do not want to answer. Your answers will be kept private as required by law.

**PRINCIPAL PURPOSE:** The information you provide will be used primarily to (a) provide you with services, (b) monitor and help improve the performance of Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) programs, and (c) help understand HMRF services and participants across programs.

**ROUTINE USES:** Your information will be kept private and cannot be used against you in any law enforcement action. Your information may be combined with information from other individuals, but you will not be personally identifiable. However, there may be circumstances where disclosure of your personal information may be requested; in these cases, processes are in place to further protect your information for such requests. These requests may include: (a) by a congressional office if you ask that office to help obtain a copy of your records; (b) to coordinate and respond to a data security breach; (c) for research or evaluation purposes; (d) for administrative or legal actions; or (e) by contractors supporting the purpose and uses described here, but only on a must know basis in order to perform their duties. Please see the sources below for more information about these routine uses.

**DISCLOSURE:** This request is voluntary. The relevant SORN is 09-80-0361, OPRE Research and Evaluation Project Records.

**AUTHORITY:** 42 U.S.C. 613 - Research, evaluations, and national studies; 42 U.S.C. 628b - National random sample study of child welfare; 42 U.S.C. 1310 - Cooperative research or demonstration projects; 42 U.S.C. 9836 - Designation of Head Start agencies; 42 U.S.C. Subchapter II-B - Child Care and Development Block Grant; and Pub L. No. 110-161, Division G, Title II, Payments to States for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (121 STAT. 2179).

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