



**TITLE: Separating Same-Sex Parents: Navigating Relationships With Service Providers**

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Same-sex parents navigate their relationships with professionals and service providers in an effort to find those whom they feel comfortable with disclosing their lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity as well as their same-sex parenthood. As a consequence of their separation, separated same-sex parents were often required to renegotiate these relationships with existing service providers such as Centrelink, foster agencies, and schools. Likewise, parents encountered a new range of service providers with whom they would have to navigate relationships with, such as lawyers, mediators, family relationship centres, psychologists, and counsellors. This presentation presents findings from a national qualitative study of separated same-sex parents and explores their experiences with professionals and service providers during and after their separation. While some participants were prevented from seeking the assistance they needed out of fear of prejudice, those that did visit professionals and service providers reported mixed experiences, with some participants describing encounters fraught with difficulty, while for others, their experiences were much better than they had anticipated.