**Photovoice Research Studies- Tip Sheet**

**What is Photovoice?**

This is a qualitative data collection method in which investigators ask study participants to take photographs of some aspect of their lives or community. The photographs are then used as a starting point for focus groups or to elicit more information about the participants’ values, beliefs, and perceptions. The degree of risk for photovoice research projects depends on the subject of the photos. For example, this process may be higher risk if participants are taking pictures that include other individuals or pictures of illegal activities.

**Who are the study participants?**

Study participants are those individuals who are being asked to take the pictures. If minors will be taking photographs, parent/ guardian permission is required.

**Individuals in the Photos**

If researchers are asking for participants to take pictures of other individuals in a private setting (i.e. dorm room, private home, etc.) then all individuals in the photo must give consent for their photo to be taken, used for research, and publicly displayed, if applicable (i.e. conferences and publications). If an individual in the photo is a minor, then written permission from a parent/guardian is required to take the minor’s photo and use it for research. In this case, researchers must have a plan for linking signed release forms with pictures.

**IRB Application Tips**

When submitting a photovoice project to the HRPP, researchers Should include the following information:

* Discuss whether you are providing the cameras or if participants will use their own
* Decide what the guidelines will be for the photos (e.g., private settings, illegal activity, etc.) and describe how those guidelines will be communicated to participants?
* How will the photographs be transferred from the participant to you?
* Are there any risks related to the participant taking photos of third parties? If so, describe how those risks will be minimized?

The following must be included in the consent document for research participants:

* Participants must be informed of how the photographs will be used in the study (e.g., storage, retention, transferring/ sharing photographs, and access by persons other than the research team.)
* A description of whether participants’ images will be attributed to them
* Statement about possible future use of the photographs

If you have further questions about photovoice please contact the UTK HRPP at (865) 974-7697 or email us at utkirb@utk.edu