

## Sample DSiN permission forms and guidance

You will find two sample permission forms attached to this guidance document. These models can be adapted to fit your project, or you may want to write your own. In any case, please consider the following principles when creating and using permission forms.

### The purpose of permission forms

Permission forms are not about “ticking boxes” or convincing people to agree: they are an essential research tool.

They should inform potential research participants about the broad purpose of the research project, who is funding it, and any risks involved.

Language used should never have the effect of applying pressure or coercing participation.

All permission forms need to include a section explaining that permission can be withdrawn at a later date, and explain how a research participant can do so.

All permission forms should explain how confidentiality will be protected.

### Accessibility

Think about the language level used. Make sure that your research respondents can read and understand the form.

If your research respondents have difficulty with reading for any reason, think about alternative ways to present the information on the form to them. These might include:

- Reading the form out loud.
- Making a recording or video recording of the text on the form.
- Presenting the information in a visual format, or in a format that includes both text and visuals.

Consent can be recorded or videotaped, or conveyed using a textual or visual format other than handwriting, when this is necessary because of an impairment.

### Understanding

How the form is presented and by whom also makes a difference. Always try to take time to discuss the research and the form with each participant, answering any questions they may have as completely as possible.

This is especially important in research projects where you are working with children or with adults who are unable to give their own consent. While a parent or guardian may give consent, it is the researcher’s job to ensure that the *participant* understands why they are taking part and what will happen.

It is a core principle in Disability Studies that people with impairments should benefit from research that involves them. This benefit can be tangible (improving a service they receive, improving self-advocacy skills) or somewhat intangible (feeling proud about their contribution, improving general understanding of a condition or service). Barton (1999)

suggested that inclusive or emancipatory research on disability must engage with three key questions:

- Who is this work for?
- What right do we have to undertake it?
- What responsibilities come with it?

In no case should participants be exploited to meet the researcher's aims and then forgotten. This leaves people feeling let down, and reduces the benefit to them from taking part. For this reason, researchers should always think about how research results will be communicated to participants, and also how they will be shared with others who share the participants' impairment or use similar services.

Nind (2008) has written an excellent research review that covers many tricky aspects of research design, consent, and voice when working with disabled people. It includes excellent suggestions for ways of making consent forms and other research processes accessible and ethical. Researchers are strongly encouraged to read it, follow its references to explore pertinent issues in depth, and consider ways to improve their overall research design as well as consent/permissions procedures.

## **RESOURCES**

Barton, Len (1999) "Developing an emancipatory research agenda: Possibilities and dilemmas," in: P. Clough and L. Barton (eds.) *Articulating with Difficulty: Research Voices in Inclusive Education*. London: Sage, pp. 29-39.

Nind, Melanie (2008) *Conducting Qualitative Research with People With Learning, Communication and Other Disabilities: Methodological Challenges*. Southampton: National Centre for Research Methods. Online at:  
<http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/491/1/MethodsReviewPaperNCRM-012.pdf>

Dear respondent:

We are carrying out research into [x]. The goal of this research is [x].

We would like to request that you contribute by being interviewed in person, or using email or Skype.

We are also hoping that some research participants will be interested in being a co-researcher by [x: for example, interviewing other people or contributing to data analysis ]. We will provide you with training and support to do this. Co-researchers have the option of being listed by name in any publications. We can also provide a letter of reference to co-researchers, which could be helpful with future university or work applications.

Our research results will be used as the basis of an article to be published in an academic journal. We may also present the results at a conference. We would be happy to provide you with a copy of any research publications.

You will not be quoted by name in any article or presentation—all respondents will be identified using pseudonyms. We will not provide any descriptive details about you that would make it easy for someone to guess who you are. We keep our research notes on password-protected computers or locked files.

You have the right to withdraw from the research project at any point prior to [date].

It is important to us that you feel comfortable with how the information is collected, and with how it will be used. For that reason, we ask that you sign below (typing your name in the space provided if returning the questionnaire electronically) if you agree to take part.

Sincerely,

[researcher name]

I agree to participate in this research.

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*Sign or type your name above*

Tick the following boxes as appropriate:

- I agree to participate in this research by being interviewed.
- I would like to be a co-researcher on this project.