

TIP SHEET



SEE IT
FILM IT
CHANGE IT

OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT

FILMING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CAN BE DANGEROUS: BE SAFE. BE ETHICAL. BE EFFECTIVE.

WHAT IS INFORMED CONSENT?

Informed consent is a legal and ethical obligation of human rights defenders to protect the safety, security, and dignity of their interviewees. There are 4 main elements:

DISCLOSURE

The use and the purpose of the interview must be fully explained. This helps protect the interviewee's safety and maintains an honest relationship between interviewer and interviewee.

VOLUNTARINESS

The interviewee must voluntarily give their permission for the interview to be used and express whether he or she is willing to be identified by name.

COMPREHENSION

The interviewee must fully comprehend the implications of the interview and the intended distribution, including potential consequences of online distribution. They have the right to rescind their permission for future use of the footage – however, ensure they comprehend that it is not possible to permanently remove materials from the internet. Provide an example of a worst case scenario.

COMPETENCE

The interviewee must be able to comprehend the implications of his or her participation. This is an especially important issue with special populations (e.g., children, people with mental disabilities, people who have suffered significant recent trauma).



OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT

STEP 1

Determine if your interviewee needs special consideration (e.g., children, persons with mental disabilities, survivors of trauma and violence). If so, consider your options for obtaining consent from a legal guardian or having a counselor present for survivors of trauma. Do not proceed if you are unsure of their comprehension of the video's implications and potential risks.

STEP 2

Begin with an off-camera interview to introduce who you are and if you represent a group or organization. Make sure your interviewee knows about you and the people involved with the project.

STEP 3

Describe why you are filming and how you plan to use their interview. Ensure the interviewee is participating voluntarily and that they clearly understand the purpose of the project, the implications of participating, how the video will be used, and who may see it.

STEP 4

Ask if they want their identity protected. If anonymity is needed, explain that you can conceal their identity while filming by using lighting techniques or recording only their hands. Alternately, you can propose blurring out their face or distorting their voice when editing. Learn if they would like to use their full name, or change any part of it.

STEP 5

Proceed with an on-camera consent or paper consent.

QUESTIONS FOR ON-CAMERA CONSENT

On-camera consent can include the answers to the following questions:

- Please state your name, the date, and location of this interview.
- Do you understand what we are doing? Please explain in your own words.
- Do you consent to your interview being included in this project, including video and any other forms of media that may be used (print, photos, website)?
- Do you know who may see the final video?
- Are there any restrictions to using the information you provide us with or video itself that we need to be aware of?
- Are you aware that you can stop the filming process at any time in order to ask questions or to take a break?