

Transcript

The journey of effective ongoing consent and assent in research with young people

Voiceover

Why think about effective informed consent and assent and what do we mean?

In research with young people consent is given by an adult responsible for the young person's care. However, the young person should also be asked for their consent which means they need to be fully informed about the research - we call this a young person's assent.

Why think about consent as an ongoing journey?

During a research project, many things can change impacting how young people feel about participating, so it's good to think of consent as an ongoing journey of consent. Signing a consent form before research activities start is just the beginning of an ongoing process to ensure participants feel safe and confident about taking part. The researcher should frequently check that participants also remain interested and motivated to participate, all the way through to the final results.

The Journey of Effective Ongoing Consent can be thought of in four stages:

Stage 1 – Promotion

After getting the young person's interest and permission to participate, we need to ensure they understand:

- **What the research is about**, including the why
- **What sort of help is needed**, including any questions they might be asked
- **The potential outcomes of the research**, for instance how it might benefit young people

Researchers should be reflecting upon whether young people appear:

- Happy to meet and talk with them about the research?
- And interested in the research topic?

Stage 2 – Enrolment

Once young people understand what the research is about they may have their own interest in the topic. Taking time to ask what they might find interesting will show that their views are valued and build a trusting relationship. The researcher can also learn a lot about the topic from the young person's interests in it. They could even help to shape the research contributing ideas to the questions and the way that data will be collected and analysed.

The young person should now understand:

- The research questions
- What they will be asked to do and the information needed

Before seeking consent, participants will need information about their rights, these should be prepared in simple, age-appropriate forms that participants can keep. Researchers should be thinking about whether the young people are showing understanding.

Stage 3 – Engagement & Data collection

By this stage, the researcher and young people should understand the sort of information that is needed.

And the researcher can check the participants are happy about how their data will be managed, prompting the young people to consider how they want their data shared. The researcher should make sure the young people are still actively engaged and offering input.

Stage 4 – Analysis & Dissemination

Having collected and then analysed all the data, the researcher can now discuss how findings might be shared with others including their presentation and who will receive the findings.

For instance, are participants happy to be directly quoted and how do they want their participation in the research acknowledged and do the research questions seem relevant to them.

Using a reflexive research diary to prompt.

Hopefully thinking about the needs of the participants at different stages assists the researcher to support and reassure them.

You may think of different stages or questions, but the most important part is ensuring your young participants are comfortable, that they are actively **assenting** to take part.

Keeping a diary of questions and prompts can remind you to look out for signs of discomfort and quickly address them.

Being a reflexive researcher and remaining mindful of ongoing informed assent fosters ethical practice, ensuring researchers respect and value the young participants.

The result is better research where young participants feel confident and engaged enough to contribute their ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Visit OUR VOICES website for more free resources to help you plan and manage research about and with young people.