



# A GUIDE TO PHOTOVOICE

FOR SHARING POSITIVE IDENTITY, BUILDING ON EACH OTHER'S STRENGTHS, STAYING CONNECTED, AND EXPANDING COMMUNITY IN A TIME OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

[Photovoice](#) is a participatory action research methodology that empowers people to identify, represent and enhance their community and life circumstances through images. The creator of Photovoice described it as a process that “entrusts cameras to the hands of people to enable them to act as recorders, and potential analysts for social action and change, in their own communities. It uses the immediacy of the visual image and accompanying stories to furnish the evidence and to promote an effective, participatory means of sharing expertise to create healthful public policy.”<sup>1</sup>

## Steps to a Photovoice Project

- 1. Set up your platform.** There are numerous ways to create a photo sharing forum, but we recommend downloading the [PhotoCircle](#) app, creating an album for your group, and inviting each member to it so that they can add/edit.
- 2. Identify your topic.** Collaborate with your group to find out what they want to learn from each other's perspectives on the world, or what lens they want to encourage people to try on as they look at their own identities or communities. Check out the photo sharing theme [Find Your Good](#) for inspiration.
- 3. Establish norms for taking photos.** Talk with your group about what it means to them to be consulted before having their image or personal space photographed and shared. Ask that everyone seek consent from anyone pictured in their photos, and that they explain the reason and the forum in which the images will be shared.
- 4. Take photos and share!** Make sure everyone can add to the photo sharing platform you created. Invite the group to upload photos and write captions that describe why the photos they took represent the topic to them.
- 5. What to do with what you've made.** Step back from your album and see what themes appear throughout. Depending on the purpose of your project, these themes might form an image bank of inspiration and peer support, a collage of truths about the lives and experiences of participants, or photo representations of the group's vision/recommendations for their community.

## Ethical considerations

The public nature of photography can easily infringe on people's privacy or anonymity. People who agree to appear in a photo, or have a photo taken of their home, may not know what the captions and reflections that will later accompany the photo will say. Consider the following before taking photos:

- When taking photos, be careful that you are not intruding into someone's private space or capturing something that may embarrass them.
- If another person (or their personal space) is featured in a photo, ask their consent before taking the photo, show them the photo, and ask if they consent to it being shared publicly.
- Be transparent with people shown in photos about how images will be used for the project.
- Be aware of any local community/cultural norms and how local people will react to having their community documented in photos.

<sup>1</sup> Wang C. & Burris M. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment. *Health Education & Behavior*, 24 (3), 369–387.