**Logo

Description automatically generatedInstrument ESSENTIALS   
for Assessing Photovoice Activities**

**Topic**

Photovoice is a qualitative participatory research method designed to give voice to the needs and views of underrepresented populations through the public sharing of findings to policy makers and the larger community. Photovoice projects are more than just about taking and exhibiting photos to illustrate societal conditions, however. The transformation of participants into agents of change is even more important. For this reason, evaluation activities measure not only audience engagement but also the personal growth (e.g., skill-building, confidence and empowerment) of participants.

**Terminology**

* Constructive criticism: Objectively assessing the strengths and weaknesses of others’ photographs and then tactfully communicating suggestions for improvement.
* Ethics: The code of behavior which respects the rights of those being documented to control their own image or decline to be photographed.
* Empowerment: Enabling the marginalized to bring about social change by defining and bringing focus to community issues important to them; where participants become researchers instead of the objects of research.
* Voice: Creating space for participants to represent their lived experience and communicate their world view (which is often unheard or underrepresented) to the community and policy makers.

**Photovoice Projects Aim to Build**

* Critical thinking: self-reflection, ability to discern quality
* Emotional intelligence: ability to provide constructive criticism to peers; humility/willingness to learn from others; capacity to demonstrate grace/patience/appreciation to peers/program/ community members
* Communication/public speaking: ability to describe lived experience through photo captions; ability to confidently and concisely tell their “story”
* Event planning: ability to organize and plan a community exhibit, generate media coverage, invite community stakeholders
* Community activism: detect the relevance of their lived experience to the larger community issues; build relationships with peers and community leaders/organizations; interest/willingness to work on the issue beyond the photovoice project
* Accountability: raise public and policy maker awareness of political, health and societal inequities in order to prompt tangible action and systemic change

**Uses of Evaluation in Photovoice Projects**

**Activity Debriefings** are used to do quick check-ins with participants to:

1. Assess comprehension
2. Measure satisfaction
3. Gather feedback + ideas for improvement
4. Make space for participants to express their feelings and concerns

Measures

* How did that feel?
* What did you learn?
* What was important?
* What did you like/not like?
* How could the process/experience be better?

**Observations** of participants are used to:

1. Document and assess progress/capacity building during activities
2. Assess the effectiveness of processes/activities
3. Provide insights to facilitators re: needed course corrections

Measures

* Content comprehension
* Skill acquisition/demonstrated mastery
* Fidelity/accuracy
* Participant/group interactions and cohesion

**SHOWeD Reflection and Discussions** are used to:

1. Individually reflect on a photo’s meaning, quality, relevance
2. Collectively interpret images and assess their composition, quality, relevance to the theme

Measures

* What do you **see** here?
* What is really **happening** here?
* How does this relate to **our** lives?
* **Why** does this concern, situation, or strength exist?
* How can we become **empowered** through our new understanding?
* What can we **do**?

**Participant/Audience Surveys** are used as quick check-ins to:

1. Assess comprehension of the topic
2. Assess satisfaction with the delivery
3. Gather feedback + ideas for improvement

Measures

* Are key messages being understood?
* Is this the best way to frame/present the issue?
* How satisfied are participants/audiences with the activity content, format, pace?
* How could the experience/content/facilitation be improved?
* What did participants/audiences get from the experience?

**Participant Focus Groups** can be used to go deeper on important topics such as:

1. Assess the “why” of things
2. Understand a topic/range of perspectives
3. Explore possible solutions or directions

Measures

* Underlying causes
* The range of viewpoints people might have based on conditions, roles, experiences
* Brainstorm ideas and then discuss how they could work

**Participatory Needs Assessment** can be used to involve participants in identifying and setting directions or priorities by:

1. Critically examining community conditions
2. Collectively assessing needs or the scope of a problem

Measures

* What is seen?
* What is missing?
* What improvements are needed?
* Who needs to see the evidence and take action?

**Participatory Asset Mapping** is a means of taking a critical look at group/community gaps and resources in order to advocate/work to improve conditions

1. Inventory individual and community strengths and gaps
2. Identify goals/desired change
3. Discuss possible/best strategies for change
4. Set priorities

Measures

* Individual and collective knowledge
* Individual and collective skills
* Individual and collective resources
* Individual and collective experience/expertise
* Rank priorities in order of importance/feasibility

**Participatory Program Evaluation**

1. Examine the process and impact of program
2. Document successes and failures of program activities

Measures

* Intervention: What happened along the way?
* How well were program activities implemented?
* Reach: Who was included/affected by the intervention? Who was left out?
* Effectiveness: Did the program inform/mobilize participants/the community/policymakers? Did it motivate them to take action?
* Impact: How did participants/the community change as a result of the program? What skills/confidences/capacities/relationships were acquired as a result?