**Consent Guidelines and Template**

The objective of a consent form is to guarantee that the participant comprehends the requirements expected of them prior to their agreement. Achieving a balance between incorporating all necessary details and ensuring the document is easily understandable can appear challenging. Please consult the following recommendations for advice on how to maintain this equilibrium.

1. Educational – To safeguard the participant from potential harm, as well as to protect yourself and your institution from legal issues, it is essential to include the following elements:

* Your identity, your association, and how to contact you
* The objective of the research
* An overview of the research procedures, their location, and the anticipated time frame
* Assurance of privacy
* Potential risks and advantages
* Assurance that participation is optional
* Information on how to contact the IRB

2. Understandable – Merely listing the elements above is insufficient. It is imperative to take steps to ensure that the information is fully understood by your participants. Here are some strategies to consider:

* Keep your intended audience in mind
* Substitute specialized terms with more commonly understood words where feasible
* Aim for a reading comprehension level of the 8th grade as a general guideline
* Employ straightforward sentences and steer clear of the passive voice
* Structure the information into distinct sections with clear, bold titles

**Instructions for Diverse Participant Groups**

Should your study encompass various groups of participants, it is required to create a distinct consent form for each group.

**Is it possible to receive feedback on my consent form?**

Indeed, feedback on your consent form is available during IRB group critique sessions. It is advisable to participate in the discussions concerning eligibility criteria and recruitment documents prior to joining the one about consent documents.

**What aspects should be verified prior to submitting my consent form to the IRB?**

Prior to submission to the IRB, ensure the following:

* The eligibility requirements and descriptions of the research tasks are consistently identical, verbatim, across your consent form, any recruitment materials, and your IRB submission.
* The document is prepared for distribution to a participant: eliminate any directions, highlights, annotations, prior critiques, and any optional parts that do not pertain to your study.

**Consent Form Framework**

*This framework is applicable for research involving human subjects when the participants are aged 18 and above, and you are either not collaborating with an IRB/HRPP from a different institution, or that particular IRB/HRPP permits the use of the BeyondBound IRB consent form template.*

My name is [name], and my role at [name of your university] includes being a [doctoral student, faculty member, or staff member]. [If you have a connection to the research site and/or potential participants, include this next sentence.] Additionally, I am employed as [mention your job title and employer here].

I am inviting you to participate in a study aimed at [briefly explain the goal of your research in terms understandable to a layperson in one sentence]. The study is entitled “[Your Research or Dissertation Title Here." Ensure all principal words in the title are capitalized.].”

You are eligible to partake in this study if you fulfill all the criteria below:

1. [Detail every requirement participant must meet to be included in your study, arranging them from the most general to the most specific. These requirements must match exactly, word-for-word, with those listed in your IRB application and any recruitment materials. The criteria should be unequivocally clear, enabling potential participants to determine their eligibility upon reading this document.]
2. [Specify age criteria (“Must be 18 years of age or older”) if your study could otherwise be open to minors] My goal is to involve [mention the total number of participants you aim to recruit] individuals in this study. Please review this document thoroughly and feel free to ask any questions you might have before deciding to participate in the research.

Your Participation Details: Should you consent to participate in this study, the following will outline your involvement:

1. [Detail every activity involved in the research in the sequence they will occur. Identify the nature of the activity (such as a survey, interview, or focus group), the location or digital platform for any synchronous tasks, and the duration of each activity. Ensure these details are precisely the same as those described in your IRB submission and any materials used for recruitment.]
2. [For instance: "Fill out a survey online, lasting approximately 20 minutes"]
3. [For instance: "Engage in a one-on-one interview via Zoom, lasting between 45 to 60 minutes"]
4. [For instance: “Examine the transcript of your interview sent via email, which should take 10 to 15 minutes to review”]

Throughout these activities, inquiries will be made concerning:

* [Summarize the subjects of your inquiries within the study succinctly. This summary should encompass all demographic questions you intend to pose and any delicate or potentially distressing subjects, such as personal experiences with abuse or PTSD. Ensure that this list does not directly replicate content from your dissertation proposal or data collection tools.]
* [A generic illustration: “Your adjustment process from in-person to online teaching amidst the pandemic”]
* [For demographic information: “Details such as your age, gender, ethnicity, and any disabilities”]
* [For sensitive or provocative subjects: “Your encounters with childhood abuse and its ongoing impact into adulthood”]

**Risks:** [If your research involves minimal risk, include the following] This study presents minimal foreseeable risks or discomforts. You have the freedom to omit any question you prefer not to answer, bypass any part of the study, or withdraw from participation at any point.

[If your study entails foreseeable risks, include the following] Potential risks may involve: [Explain the risks in terms understandable to someone outside your field. Include any physical or emotional risks/discomforts. If relevant, detail any experimental aspects of the procedures.]. To mitigate these risks, you are allowed to not answer any question you're uncomfortable with, skip any part of the study, or cease your participation at any moment. [Incorporate further details about any additional measures or support available to reduce risk.]

**Benefits:** [If your study does not offer direct benefits to participants, include the following] Participating in this study does not confer any direct benefits to you. However, it may contribute to our understanding and knowledge within the study's focus area.

[If there are direct benefits to participants in your study, include the following] By taking part in this study, you might directly benefit by learning [describe the specific knowledge or skills participants may gain from the study]. Additionally, this research aims to enrich the existing knowledge on the topic it explores.

**Recording:** [Add this section if you plan to record participants in any form] I plan to [audio or audio/video] record your [responses and/or activities] using [specify the recording equipment or software: voice recorder, video camera, Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, etc.] during the [specify the recorded activities: interview, focus group, observation, etc.]. [If applicable, and the BB IRB hasn't required participant behavior monitoring:] You may turn off the video function on the online meeting platform whenever you wish.

**Compensation:** [Include this section if there is direct compensation for participants] Upon completing [specify the research activities required], you will be compensated with [state the type and amount of compensation] [explain the compensation delivery method, e.g., via email, etc.].

**Compensation from Third Party:** [If a third-party entity is handling participant compensation, include this segment] Upon completing the online survey, compensation will be provided in accordance with your arrangement with [insert the name of the company, such as Qualtrics, Survey Monkey, etc.].

**Mandated Reporting:** [If you are a mandated reporter, include this segment] In my professional capacity outside of BeyondBound, I am obligated to report any suspicions of child or elderly abuse, potential harm to oneself or others, and any crimes to the relevant authorities.

**Confidentiality:** I am committed to maintaining the confidentiality of this study's records and will take appropriate steps to ensure the protection of all your personal data. In any publication or presentation, I will not disclose any information that could potentially identify you. [Explain the measures you will implement to safeguard their confidentiality, including how the data will be handled post-study.]

**Participation is Voluntary:** Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any moment.

**If you have questions:** Should you have any immediate questions, please do not hesitate to ask. For any inquiries at a later stage, you can reach me at [email] or [phone number]. Should you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you are encouraged to contact the BeyondBound Institutional Review Board (IRB) via email at info@beyondbound.org

***The following consent statement and signature lines are to be included only if this is NOT considered a minimal risk study. Consent letters for minimal risk studies do not necessitate signatures.***

**Statement of Consent:** I have carefully read the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions, which were answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this study.

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Your Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_