

photovoice hamilton



# Manual and Resource Kit



*Photovoice 2007*

Using photography to: Help people share their ideas >  
Improve our communities > Give a voice to those not heard

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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HAMILTON  
COMMUNITY  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	<i>i</i>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
How to Use this Manual.....	1
Photovoice Concept.....	1
Photovoice Background.....	2
<b>PROCESS AND IMPACTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Participant Change Process .....	3
Community Change Process .....	4
<b>PRE-GROUP PREPARATION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
How to Run a Group.....	6
Job Descriptions (Facilitator and Assistant) .....	9
Ethics.....	11
Consent Form Outline .....	13
Safety .....	14
Facilitator Tips .....	15
<b>EXAMPLE SESSIONS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Session 1 – Introductions.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Objectives .....	16
Lesson Plan .....	17
<b>Session 2 – Learning to Use the Camera.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Objective .....	22
Lesson Plan .....	22



# CONTENTS CONTINUED

<b>Sessions 3-7 – Photo Sharing .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Sessions 8-10 – Working on the Commentary.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>FORMS AND HANDOUTS .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Pre-Group Questionnaire.....	29
What Matters To Me? .....	31
Feedback Sheet.....	32
Consent Form 1 .....	33
Consent Form 2 .....	34
Talking to People .....	35
Photovoice Guidelines .....	36
What Do I Take Pictures Of? .....	37
SHOWED.....	38
Community Impact Tracking Form.....	39
Consent Form 3 .....	40
Post-Group Questionnaire .....	41
<b>SOCIAL ACTION .....</b>	<b>42</b>
Tracking Community Impact .....	43
Media .....	44
Politicians.....	45
Where to Show Photos .....	46
<b>RESOURCE LIST .....</b>	<b>47</b>

## PREFACE

Welcome! This manual has been developed to provide practical guidelines for those wishing to start a new Photovoice program. It is our hope is that you will be inspired by the Photovoice concept to develop this unique program in your community. This manual is based on our three years of experience developing Photovoice in Hamilton, Ontario. The project was funded by the Hamilton Community Foundation through the "Tackling Poverty Together" initiative and is designed to target community members who are marginalized or living in poverty.

We were busy learning a lot even while this manual was in production. That said, this manual is reflective of the pilot phase of our Photovoice work. There may be nuances not quite fully grasped and some pieces missing. However, we feel confident that this is a good preliminary look at how Photovoice works. And we are sure that you will find your own lessons and will be able to share many interesting experiences and we hope that you will find forums to do just that.

Over time, our steering committee has evolved to include: community activists, service providers, academics, members of the arts community, and Photovoice graduates. At the start of the project, we trained with experienced Photovoice facilitators at Boston University. Since then, we have conducted 7 different Photovoice with a range of participants; including adults with mental health issues, women who have experienced abusive situations, and youth living in the downtown core.

If you are thinking about starting your own Photovoice program, we recommend that you do some background reading; review some of the suggested resources, the principles of Photovoice, and strategies for getting started. Photovoice is different than traditional therapy or self-help groups since the focus is on social action and developing partnerships for change. Photovoice is a tool for mobilizing communities and therefore the group sessions can be seen as a first step towards the process of social change.

Photovoice can be used in many different ways with many different groups, and has the potential to transform the lives of those involved. It has certainly opened up our eyes to new ways of looking at the world and has helped us to work towards improving our community. We hope that you are able to experience similar success and wish you well as you embark on your own Photovoice journey!

*- Photovoice Steering Committee, 2007*

# INTRODUCTION

1

## HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual was developed for organizations, agencies and grassroots/activist groups who are looking for an innovative way to get community issues on the public agenda. This manual provides a starting point based on the practical lessons we have learned as we worked through various Photovoice projects.

Section 1 – Maps out the concepts and philosophies of Photovoice.

Section 2 – Identifies the process and logistics of running your own Photovoice group.

Section 3 – Provides session sample plans.

Section 4 – Contains all of the forms and handouts used in the Photovoice process.

Section 5 – Lists additional resources for review.

## PHOTOVOICE CONCEPT

Photovoice blends a grassroots approach to photography and social action. It provides cameras not to health specialists, policy makers or professionals, but to people who don't usually have a say in decisions affecting their lives.

### **Photovoice has three goals:**

- It helps people to record and reflect on their community's strengths and problems.
- It identifies important issues through group discussion and photographs.
- Finally, it gets the attention of politicians and other policy people.

As creator Caroline C. Wang explains, "*What experts think is important may not match what people at the grassroots think is important.*"

(Adapted from [photovoice.com](http://photovoice.com))

Participants benefit from Photovoice, as they are able to speak about the issues that are bothering them, connect with others in their community, and advocate for change. At the same time, they learn basic marketable skills including photographic technique, working with digital images, and the process of creating an art show or product.

***"We hope that Photovoice, used in an ethical manner, may serve as a creative tool to help promote both healthful public policy and wiser practice." (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001, p. 571)***

## BACKGROUND

Inarguably photography has shaped modern culture significantly. In particular, the rise of “photojournalism” enabled both the majestic and the disastrous to be shared through pictures. Another influence on the development of photography, and Photovoice, is the increasing awareness of social inequality. In the 1960’s and 70’s, the Brazilian author Paulo Friere endorsed the idea of anti-oppressive education with underprivileged people, and that raising awareness and consciousness can lead to social justice.

Photovoice creator Caroline Wang drew from these sources in the early 1990’s in a project with women living in rural China. By distributing cameras and encouraging dialogue and advocacy, the participants successfully influenced the policies and programs that served them.

Photovoice is actually a type of “Participatory Action Research”, in which the power and control of the research is in the hands of those being studied. In many typical studies, participants or subjects are recruited to show up and be “tested” by the researchers, and then they are no longer needed. Participatory Action Research proposes that the entire project, from its conception and design through to every step of the research is done by the participants whenever possible. When the research is finished, the participants themselves “own” the data and decide how to publish or share this information.

For some, this is fairly radical. But the whole idea of Photovoice is to put the power back into the hands of those who usually don’t have much power.

# PROCESS AND IMPACTS

In our Photovoice project, we engaged in ongoing evaluation of the program. Evaluation examined two levels: impact on the participants and impact on the community.

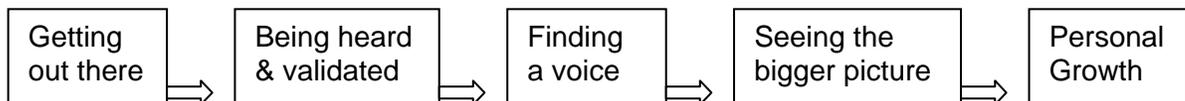
Participant impact was explored through pre and post group surveys that included a standardized Empowerment Scale. The Empowerment scale is a 28 item self-report questionnaire that measures empowerment across five different factors: self-esteem-self-efficacy, power-powerlessness, community activism and autonomy, optimism and control over the future, and righteous anger. Permission from the authors was obtained to use the tool. See: Rogers, E. S., Chamberlin, J., Ellison, M., & Crean, T. (1997). [A consumer-constructed scale to measure empowerment](#). *Psychiatric Services, 48*, 1042-1047. In addition, interviews were conducted with a sample of group participants to explore their perceptions and experience in more depth.

Community impact was explored through interviews with a sample of key stakeholders (facilitators, community partners, politicians, social activists) regarding their perceptions of Photovoice. In addition, written feedback was gathered from members of the public who attended the Photovoice gallery showings.

One of the main findings from the evaluation was that social change should be viewed as a process rather than an end point that is or is not reached.

## PARTICIPANT CHANGE PROCESS

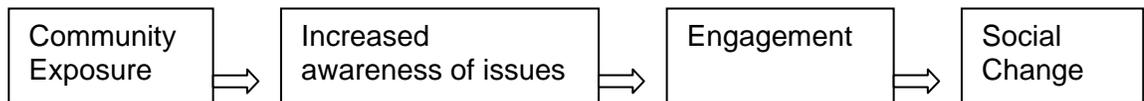
The following diagram represents the process of change for participants. Facilitators of Photovoice programs need to be aware that individuals may enter at different points in the model and not all progress through each stage. Each stage, however, can represent an important impact that Photovoice may have in the life of a participant.



For participants, the primary impact could simply be "getting out there" in the community. Many marginalized individuals are isolated; therefore Photovoice was a way of engaging with others and getting energized to go out into the community. For others, Photovoice may help them to find their voice; to look at the community differently and help them identify things that they would like to see changed. Being heard and validated by other group members as well as by others in the community can have a powerful impact on individuals who have low self-esteem and low self-efficacy. For some individuals, they may start to see "the bigger picture"; that they can have an impact on making change in the community. Others may experience personal growth, perhaps by working through issues that are important to them or by taking on new roles (i.e., speaking publicly about their experience, mentoring group members who need assistance and support).

## COMMUNITY CHANGE PROCESS

In addition to change in participants, one of the goals of Photovoice is to effect positive change in the community. Again, this can be viewed as a process that takes time to achieve.



The first phase of community exposure refers to strategies to capture the attention of the public regarding Photovoice. Strategies may include media exposure, promotional posters, and invitations sent via mail or email to the exhibit, or holding the show in a popular public forum. People need to be aware of the time and place to view the work of participants.

The next stage in the process involves increasing awareness of the community regarding issues presented by Photovoice group participants. The photographs and captions provide others with insight into the perspective of the needs of marginalized citizens; *"it opens up people's eyes to the reality of it"*. The pictures are often compelling and may draw people into a dialogue with photographers regarding the issues. As one stakeholder explains,

*"I think it has the power to help us understand the lived experience of poverty and what the issues are that we couldn't as a community or as researchers or as a mayor or as an administrator understand because we've not lived that experience."*

The third stage of "engagement" involves impacting members of the public on a deeper level, beyond having only a superficial awareness of a problem or issue. As one stakeholder reported;

*"The participant's picture of the brick wall blew me away. ... I had no idea why I was having that reaction. I just knew I was profoundly impacted by it."*

Participants talked about the difference between emotional and intellectual engagement; *"...it hits people on a different level right. It hits people on an emotional level and on a social conscious level where [traditional] research hits people intellectually."*

The final stage involves concrete action that is taken in the community in response to the issues that are identified. This can be a challenging step in the process, and may take many different forms. Policy change, for example, at a political level may take months or years to achieve, however, specific localized issues (i.e., linking to existing services) may happen more quickly.

## HOW TO RUN A GROUP

### To Run a Group it is Ideal to Have:

- A good accessible space where people feel comfortable
- 2 facilitators (ideally one from the agency/organization represented or hosting and one participant/past participant)
- Facilitators who are trained in running groups and understand the philosophy of Photovoice
- Between 3 and 10 participants
- Screening of participants so they ideally have some understanding of and commitment to the idea of social change
- Consent forms, process forms and explanatory hand outs (see Section 5)
- Enough cameras for each participant to take pictures for 5-6 sessions (and the resources to have the film developed)
- Bus tickets and snacks.

Photovoice groups typically run for approximately 10 – 12 weeks and each session lasts two to two and a half hours. The length of the group as well as the duration of each session are flexible and depend on the size of the group and the time needed to share their ideas.

### Sessions 1-2: Training

- Introductions, ice breaker
- Establish group norms (i.e., attendance, confidentiality)
- Educate re: how to use the camera
- Discuss ethical issues
- Discuss issues of importance to group members that they might focus on during Photovoice
- Review safety concerns
- Review the rights and responsibilities of the participants while using the camera

While it may be tempting for the group to start taking pictures right away, it is important that the session start with a discussion of the topics listed above. This will help the participants to think about what matters to

them, what changes they would like to see made, and how to show this through photography.

### **Sessions 3-7: Photo Sharing**

During the next sessions (roughly sessions three through seven) participants take photographs of what they believe are strengths and weaknesses of their communities, and share with group members their photos and the messages or meanings within the images.

### **Sessions 8-10: Working on the Commentary**

Finally, the last few sessions (eight through ten) are intended for making plans for social action and how best to accomplish these actions through the display of the photos, along with continued discussion of participant photos.

## **The Facilitator**

The role of the facilitator is essential to help participants to think critically and to encourage positive group dynamics. At the same time, as a facilitator, it's important to be mindful of the contributions you make to the group. Here are a few suggestions that might help you to facilitate a Photovoice group successfully:

- Aim to strike a balance between being encouraging without giving too much direction. The intention is for the participants to develop their own objectives and to create their own photographs.
- Use open-ended questions with participants who are having difficulty deciding on a photographic theme or content; for example, "What do you like about your community? What would you like to see changed?"
- Assist participants to discover their own understanding of Photovoice and the issues that impact their lives. One way to do this may be to encourage self-reflection among participants.
- Recognize and respond to the non-verbal communication of group members, using non-judgmental questions. For example, if one member of the group seems especially shy or hesitant to contribute, ask that participant if there's anything you can do to help them feel more comfortable making contributions to the group.
- Recognize strengths and weaknesses of group members in a supportive way.
- Attempt to resolve misunderstandings of a group, if any should arise, in an open and approachable manner.
- Recognize your own strengths and weaknesses.

- Seek group feedback at the end of every session in order to make improvements and fine-tune future sessions. (See Feedback Sheet, page 31)

## JOB DESCRIPTIONS

For our Photovoice Hamilton projects, we hired a facilitator and a participant co-facilitator to help run the groups. Here are the job descriptions we used to hire those positions.

### **Position: Photovoice Facilitator**

1. Obtain funding, then establish a budget and manage expenses throughout the project. This may involve some up front work in applying for grants and establishing partnerships with local businesses to get reduced rates on purchasing cameras, developing photos and preparing photos for gallery displays.
2. Recruit participants. This may involve linking with community agencies, hosting pre-group information sessions, putting up posters.
3. Recruit and train a co-facilitator. Ideally, the co-facilitator is a member of the target population who can serve as a mentor for group participants.
4. Screen participants as needed. This may involve meeting with participants individually to tell them about Photovoice and determine whether they are a good fit for the Photovoice program.
5. Book space for the Photovoice sessions and establish a schedule for meetings.
6. Initially, there may be some teaching regarding use of the camera, ethics of taking pictures, safety issues to consider and process of writing captions about the photographs. As the sessions progress, however, participants should be encouraged to take more of an active role in the discussion and to support each other. Primary role within each session is to facilitate discussion among participants and enable them to express their voice.
7. At times, it may be important to reinforce group norms regarding attendance, participation, and creating a supportive environment for discussion.
8. Ideally, the participants should identify key issues and ideas for creating change in the community. They may, however, need some assistance to prompt them to think about and discuss these ideas.
9. At the end of the Photovoice session, need to spend some time discussing where the group will go from here. What key issues have they identified and how can they be addressed? Can you help to link participants with decision makers to ensure that their voice is heard?

10. Need to ensure that there is some evaluation of the group and gallery showings of the photographs so positive changes can be made for future sessions.

### **Position: Co-ordination Assistant**

Ideally, the assistant will be a member of the target population who can serve as a mentor for group participants. They need to have a good understanding of the Photovoice philosophy and process. They should also have good communication skills in order to encourage participants to share their ideas; must be a good listener; be non-judgemental, and be invested in the process of enabling participants to find and share their voice with others. Some advanced training may be required.

1. To assist the coordinator of the project as needed.
2. Practical duties may include: getting film developed each week, making sure the meeting space is set up, ensuring that refreshments are purchased and available for the meeting.
3. In the group sessions, the assistant may help to encourage quieter members to participate or assist participants in writing down their ideas. They may also help to ensure that the sessions proceed in a timely manner.
4. Between group sessions, the assistant may provide individual support to members as needed. For example, some members may benefit from support initially in order to take pictures or to submit film for development, until they build confidence in the process. In addition, some members may need reminders about the date/time of the group session.

#### ***Logistics of Film Development***

***Since the film will take a few days to develop, need to plan in advance the dates for submitting film and picking up photographs. Participants may need to travel twice in a week; once to hand in the film / camera and a second time to attend the group.***

## ETHICS

During the first few sessions, and at any other time during Photovoice meetings, discuss with participants possible ethical issues that may arise. The following recommendations are based on the following article by Caroline Wang, the originator of Photovoice: Wang, C. C. & Redwood-Jones, Y. (2001). Photovoice ethics: Perspectives from Flint Photovoice. *Health Education and Behavior*, 28(5), 560-572

### **Invasion of privacy**

- Taking someone's photo without his or her permission is a violation of privacy. Even if the person did not appear to object, not asking permission may cause that person to retaliate and could put the photographer in danger.
- If the photographer believes a loss of naturalness might occur if permission is asked, they must "learn the art of patience"; remind participants that many professional photographers spend most of their time behind a camera just waiting. Wait until the subject has forgotten you are there, until they slip back into what they were doing.
- Asking for someone's permission to photograph him / her is a way to build their trust. It will also give the participant an opportunity to discuss what they're doing and explain the Photovoice program with members of the community.
- As a general rule, a participant is not required to receive a signature when taking a picture of a group of people where individual faces are not recognizable or if the photographer is taking a photo of something and a person just happens to walk into the shot.
- Some people may not want their photograph taken, and will have individual reasons for this.
- People often feel protective of their communities.

## **Representing communities and their members**

- Taking a photo of someone doing something risky or incriminating would go against the values and goals of Photovoice.
- Participants will also be asked to write a story to display along with each photo.
- It's important that participants ask themselves if the subject would agree with the photo taken and with the text written to accompany the photo.
- Using a camera gives the photographer a lot of power to create a message that is visually loaded with meaning; within the image is the photographer's values and message, and those the viewers will take away with them. Therefore, it's important to represent the image and the subjects within the image in an accurate way.
- Remember that the subjects are vulnerable to the image, even if they give permission to be photographed.
- You're making a photographic suggestion as a participant!

## **Advocacy that maximizes benefits to the community**

- How do you choose which photos to use in exhibition?

***Group discussion of ethical issues allows participants to gain some insight into how they should approach their subjects and subject matter, and how photographs should be presented once developed. Ultimately, the purpose of discussing ethical issues is to reduce the risks to participants of Photovoice and the members of their communities.***

## CONSENT FORMS

The originators of Photovoice recommend consideration of three different types of consent forms. Consent forms should be filled out for the following occasions:

### **Consent 1 – Participant Sign-Up** (See page 32)

Once a participant decides to become involved in Photovoice he/she will sign a consent form outlining his/her rights and responsibilities as part of the program. This consent form should be read and signed by participants on or before their first session.

### **Consent 2 – Permission to Photograph a Subject** (See page 33)

Participants will obtain a signed consent form from any subject that he/she photographs. This form will state that the subject is allowing the participant to photograph him/her. There is room on this consent form to record a subject's address so a copy of the photograph can be sent to him/her.

### **Consent 3 – Permission to Use a Photo for Display** (See page 39)

Once photos are developed, participants sign a consent form giving permission to use and publish their photos in order to promote the Photovoice project.

## SAFETY

***“The camera is not a shield...” (Wang and Redwood-Jones, 2001, p. 567)***

Photovoice facilitators should discuss safety issues with participants before they enter the community equipped with a camera. This will encourage participants to follow safety guidelines that will protect both themselves and members of the community that they may encounter.

A handout on safety should be given to participants before they begin taking photos. Please stress that participants should always use their judgment and should never put themselves in risky situations.

The Photovoice Guidelines handout (see page 35) covers the following:

- Always ask before taking a photo of someone or someone’s personal property (ex. someone’s house).
- Be respectful.
- Use a buddy system, especially when going to places you are not familiar with.
- Don’t do anything you wouldn’t usually do.
- Don’t go anywhere you wouldn’t usually go.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- **ASK FIRST** before taking a photo (See ‘Consent 2’, page 33).
- When confronted by someone aggressively (i.e. address the possibility of being mugged or robbed), stay calm, do not resist and give up the camera)

## FACILITATOR TIPS

Here are some valuable tips that will help you to run the group more smoothly.

- It is very important that the facilitator establishes and maintains a common goal for the group. It is very easy to get off track especially when the group is discussing issues that they are emotional or passionate about.
- Photovoice sessions are not therapy sessions; it is important to establish boundaries within the group. It is natural to want to offer your advice and options and thus get off track. For some participants, the photographs may reflect issues that they are very passionate about and may raise unresolved issues from their past. Photographs can be very powerful in generating a range of emotions. It is important to be supportive of group members and enable them to find and share their voice. It is also important to balance individual needs with the needs of the other group members. At times, the individual may need support or direction to link with other community supports to work through issues that emerge in the group that need more intensive work to resolve.
- When sharing photos and thoughts, it is a good idea to limit each participant's turn to ten or fifteen minutes depending on the number of participants, so there is enough time for everyone to share.
- Stress to the participants that their photos do not have to be perfect. Photovoice is not about perfection. Remind the group that they will be writing a commentary to help bring out the message in the photo.
- The day the film is to be handed in for development must be different from the day the group meets. In the past, handing in film on Tuesday and meeting on Thursday for discussion has worked well. Make sure that the company doing the developing work is in agreement with the timeframe.

## SESSION 1

### Introductions

The first few Photovoice sessions are designed to help participants to get to know one another and feel comfortable with the group. Once everyone has arrived, ask participants to introduce themselves to the rest of the group. Group norms should be established within the first session, and these can be decided on as a group. This way, everyone will know what's expected of him or her and what is expected from the group.

The purpose of these sessions is to get participants thinking about what is important to them. They should be given the opportunity to reflect on their community; what they like about it and what they would like to see changed. Their photos will document these experiences and will make suggestions for future changes.

#### Before the Session

- Gather materials and handouts
- Set up chairs in a semi-circle, facing the screen and flipchart

#### Materials

- Handouts
- Name tags
- Pens, paper, writing surfaces
- Flip Chart and markers

#### Objectives

##### Participants will:

1. **Get to know others in the group**
2. **Learn/review general concept of Photovoice**
3. **Start thinking about themes for Photovoice photos**
4. **Learn how to use the cameras respectfully**

## Lesson Plan

### 1. Introductions

Welcome participants. Encourage people to use nametags. Have everyone introduce him or herself.

### 2. Icebreaker

Use an icebreaker exercise to help people get to know one another. For example, ask everyone to describe a photograph that has been influential to him or her. This could be a personal (family) snapshot, a photo they have taken themselves, or a famous image from a magazine, newspaper, etc. Group members can describe the picture, and then say how this image has influenced them. Facilitator could start with an example to illustrate.

Another idea is to ask the group to speak about why they joined Photovoice.

***Ask participants to fill out the Pre-Group Questionnaire. (See page 28***

### 3. Group Norms

Ask participants what they need to make this group experience work well for everyone. What ground rules are needed? Record these on the flipchart, and save to post at all subsequent meetings.

Suggestions:

- Confidentiality – what is said here stays here.
- Punctuality – please be on time.
- Attendance -establish a way of notifying facilitators if they are not able to attend a session.
- Respect – one person talking at a time, use respectful language, respectful of differences in opinion.
- Disputes can be worked out. Talk directly to others, not about them when they aren't present.
- Scents and smells – limit perfumes or scented products, and be mindful of body odour.

### 4. What is Photovoice?

Ask people what their understanding is of Photovoice. What will people be doing and why?

- Show the PowerPoint slide show (if available)
- At the “What will I be doing?” slide, distribute the “flow-chart” handout. Walk through the steps, answering questions.

## 5. “What Matters to Me?” Discussion Exercise (See page 30)

- a) Ask people to divide into small groups of 3 or 4. Request that people join up with others they do not know (split up friends or acquaintances).
- b) Ask people to first individually reflect on **WHERE** they live, and **HOW** they live, and then to list 3 things they are proud of and 3 things that need to change.

**Ask participants to fill out the “What Matters to Me?” form. (See page 30)**

- c) Encourage people to think broadly. Photovoice ideas needn't be limited to pictures of streets downtown. Like a pebble in water, people could consider these questions for themselves personally, then expand their thinking to include other things, their own living space, other people around them, other settings, and other places...
- d) When people are finished, ask participants to share their lists with others in their small group.
- e) Ask: “What did you notice about the ideas people shared?”

## 6. Themes

What is a “theme?”

- A common or shared idea
- A broad subject or area

How could we identify themes? How do we know when we have one?

- Two or more people share an idea
- A topic keeps coming up again and again

- f) It's natural for our brains to look for patterns. Photovoice can tap into this:
  - Helps people to be creative: “This week, try to take some pictures on the theme.”

- Could be how a show or display is organized.
- Could be persuasive: “75% of Photovoice participants said through their images that they thought \_\_\_\_\_ was very important.”

- g) Ask participants to decide on one “theme” for the small group. How could people share their own ideas on this theme using pictures?
- h) What would you like to say about this theme? What experience can you draw from?
- i) What image would “tell your story”? Share in the groups.

## 7. Empowering the Experience

Explain how Photovoice is going to take the direction that the members want, that participants should feel they have complete control over:

- What the pictures will show
- What the captions or words say
- What themes will be used
- Where the pictures are shown
- Who sees them

Brainstorm with participants their ideas for how this Photovoice project should proceed.

## 8. Discussion

Remember, these will be **YOUR** pictures, this is **YOUR** project.

Where it goes is up to you. Some Photovoice groups keep track of their experiences in different ways. For example, groups can:

- Record the photo discussion session so as to not lose any of the important things said.
- Write about what it’s been like to do the project.
- Keep journals, and sections could be put together somehow at the end (remember Themes?)
- Complete questionnaires, either written or over the phone, which keeps track of how their experience has been
- See if they changed their attitudes, or impressions of themselves.

Brainstorm with the group ways they would like to “keep track” of the work they do.

**9. Wrap Up**

Ask participants to share how they found this session. Ask for feedback on what worked well, and what could change.

***Ask participants to fill out the Feedback Sheet. This can be done confidentially (see page 31)***

***Ask participants to fill out the Consent 1 form once they have decided to be a participant in the program. (See page 32)***

## SESSION 2

### Learning to Use the Camera

This session will begin with a discussion surrounding the basic principles of photography as well as the safe care and handling of the camera. Most groups use disposable cameras. These cameras are relatively easy to use as they are point and shoot. Hand out the cameras to the group and have everyone practice taking a picture. You should also discuss camera basics such as the use of the flash. If you are not comfortable leading this lesson, you may want to have an experienced photographer talk with the group.

Photovoice will cover the cost of developing 1 roll of 24-exposure film per week. Disposable cameras will be provided to participants. Participants are welcome to use their own cameras if they wish to do so. Some groups use digital cameras, if that is the case then 24 images would be developed.

The handout titled, **“What do I take Pictures of?”** (see page 36) provides discussion ideas about content and themes. Often, the best photos contain subject matter that the participant feels passionate about. Ultimately, the participant should keep in mind the question “What message does this say?” when deciding on a theme. The purpose of Photovoice is social action for change therefore the participant’s photos should come from the heart.



The Stairway - By Ronson

*“Black rails take you to a dark place. Children smoke here. People do drugs, drink alcohol, pee, and have sex on these steps. It is an area to be avoided. Downtown Hamilton is deteriorating and Jackson Square is in need of repair. Why do we not supply paint and do murals?”*

## **Before Session 2**

- Gather materials and handouts
- Set up chairs in a semi-circle, facing the screen and flipchart

## **Materials**

- Handouts
- Name tags
- Pens, paper, writing surfaces
- Flip chart and markers
- Norms list from previous session
- Cameras to be handed out

### ***Objectives***

#### ***Participants will:***

- 1. Consider using cameras respectfully***
- 2. Learn how to use consent forms***
- 3. Practice introducing themselves to prospective subjects***

## **Lesson Plan**

### **1. Introductions**

Welcome participants. Encourage people to use nametags. Have everyone re-introduce him or herself.

### **2. Review Group Norms**

### **3. Scenarios**

Facilitators should present the following scenarios. Participants may act out the scene while a narrator reads:

- a) “Frank is in his home, eating supper. He happens to look out his window, and sees someone on the sidewalk near his house. The person keeps looking up and down the street nervously. He seems to be looking at Frank’s house. Finally this person pulls out a camera, takes a quick picture of the house and hurries away.”
- b) “Judy has to work an early morning shift. She didn’t sleep well, and hasn’t had her coffee yet. She is tired and cranky, having just dragged herself out of bed. She is standing at the bus shelter waiting for her bus. Someone across the

street is watching her. This person all of a sudden pulls out a camera and takes her picture.”

**After each scenario is acted out, ask the group:**

- What seems to be happening here?
- What is going wrong?
- What could be done differently?

**4. The Camera and Control**

Pose the question, “How is carrying a camera like having power or control?” Brainstorm at the flip chart. Some ideas:

- Others might not want their picture taken, don’t have a choice
- Others are “forced” to participate in your picture-taking
- Its an “intrusion” to have a camera pointed your way
- It can make people angry, nervous, upset...
- Consider the word “take” in “taking a picture”
- Some cultures believe you are taking someone’s soul when you take their image

***Ask participants, “What would you not want to be photographed doing?”***

**11. ASK FIRST!**

Brainstorm a list of the pros and cons of always asking permission before taking a picture. Here is a list of suggestions:

<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Gain Trust</li><li>○ Good public relations</li><li>○ Keep people from getting angry</li><li>○ Respectful; gives person a chance to say no</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ May miss the perfect shot</li><li>○ Can’t be spontaneous</li><li>○ Takes too much time</li><li>○ They might say no</li></ul>

***Hand out Consent 2 and have participants look it over (See page 33)***

## 6. Practicing the Introduction

***Hand out the “Talking to People” sheet (see page 34)***

Have participants split into pairs, and practice going over the suggested script together.

When people have had time to practice, reconvene and ask for a few volunteers to role-play for the group. Facilitators could start gently being resistive, and continue the discussion of how to respond.

## 7. Safety

Review the following with participants:

- Buddy system
- Don't do anything you wouldn't usually do
- Don't go anywhere you wouldn't usually go
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Ask first!
- What if you are robbed or mugged?
- Stay calm
- **Do not resist**
- If they are after your camera, give it up!

***Hand out the Photovoice Guidelines sheet (see page 35)***

## 8. Discussion

Have participants discuss some of their ideas about what they might photograph.

***Hand out the “What do I take Pictures of?” Sheet (see page 36)***

### **9. Cameras**

Cameras should be handed out at this time to the participants. Spend a little time and go over how to use the camera, if using a disposable camera, emphasize the use of the flash. Give clear instructions as to when and where the cameras/film is to be handed in for development. You will need a few days in-between the time the cameras/film are handed in and picking up the developed film. For example participants hand in their cameras on a Monday or Tuesday for development and meet as a group on a Thursday. Make sure to work out the details with the developer of your choosing.

### **10. Wrap Up**

Ask participants to bring their cameras to the next session, and to dress ready to go out for a photo-hunt/walk.

***Ask participants to fill out the Feedback Sheet (see page 31)***

## SESSIONS 3-7

### Photo Sharing

During sessions three to seven the participants will be sharing their photos with each other. Have the participants divide up their two sets of photos before choosing the two or three photos they want to talk about and collect one full set with the negatives. Once that is completed the participants may now pick their two or three photos they would like to share with the group. The number of photos each member can talk about will be determined by the number of present participants and the amount of time given to each individual to talk about their photos.

Facilitators should keep a full set of photos with negatives until the end of the program, when all photos and negatives will be handed back to the participants. This way, when the final photos are chosen for the presentation, you will have the negatives and originals on hand.

***SHOWED (see page 37) is a useful tool used to guide the participants when discussing their photos. This form will help the participant remember what their thoughts were when they took and shared the photo. The facilitator should keep the photo with the filled out SHOWED sheet until weeks 8–10, when all photos are returned to participants. It is best to keep all photos, negatives and filled out SHOWED forms together in a safe place along with any consent forms that were filled out during these weeks.***

## SESSIONS 8-10

### Working on the Commentary

During sessions 8 – 10 the participants will be given back **all of their photos**; including the photos accompanying the SHOWED forms. The participants will be given time to choose the photos that they wish to exhibit. They will then be asked to develop a commentary for each photo. Depending on the needs of the group, the participants may wish to type up their own commentaries or the facilitators may assist with this stage of the project. Participants may choose to use a photo that was not shared during the sessions; this is OK as the project is **whatever the participant wants it to be**. This is why it is most practical for the facilitators to collect a second set of photos and negatives during the discussion stage of the project.

The other important task is to decide how participants want to share their photographs with the community.

Would they like to have a public gallery display? Displays may occur within a community art gallery, within city hall or in an outdoor park (rain permitting). Think about the audience you would like to reach with your message. Gallery displays can be a very powerful medium. For participants, it can be a way of reinforcing the importance of their work, a place to talk about their message, and to interact with decision makers. It is also a way to draw the public in to raise their awareness of issues identified in the group. Politicians or other decision makers can be invited to speak at the event as a way of creating a dialogue about the issues. Media coverage can also raise the profile of the event.

What other forums could they use to get their message across? With the advent of the internet, perhaps an online gallery display, an e-zine or blog might be a forum for exchanging ideas. Is there a particular decision maker that needs to hear the message? Is there a potential community partner with a shared vision that could be recruited in your campaign for community change and social justice? Perhaps photographs with accompanying letters could be sent by mail or in person to the target audience. Perhaps you want to create a calendar, series of postcards or posters for public display to profile the issues to a wider public audience.

The possibilities are only limited by your imagination (and perhaps by resources of time and money!). It is important, however, to have a thoughtful discussion about your end products and how they can be best used to effect change.

# FORMS AND HANDOUTS

5

## THIS SECTION CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING FORMS:

- Pre-Group Questionnaire
- What Matters To Me?
- Feedback Sheet
- Consent Form 1
- Consent Form 2
- Talking to People
- Photovoice Guidelines
- What Do I Take Pictures Of?
- SHOWED
- Community Impact Tracking Form
- Consent Form 3
- Post-Group Questionnaire



## PRE-GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

### Participant Pre-group Questionnaire

Date:

*The purpose of this survey is to learn more about you, where you are coming from, and how you are feeling at the start of the group. Some of the questions at the start are a bit personal because we want to find out if we are helping the right people. Photovoice was developed for people who find it hard to fit in with the rest of society at times -maybe because they don't have very much money, don't have a very good place to live or are living with a disability. Please answer as honestly as possible so we can learn more about who is coming to the program.*

#### Personal Background

Are you male or female? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your age?

- |                          |       |                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 18-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 40-49 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 25-29 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 50-59 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 30-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> | > 60  |

What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Common law
- Separated/Divorced

Where do you live?

- On your own
- With family
- Boarding home/2<sup>nd</sup> level lodging home
- Supported living (i.e., paid staff come to help)
- Temporary Shelter

What is your highest level of education?

- Grade school (up to grade 8)
- High school (up to grade 12)
- Technical training certificate

- Some college or university
- Completed college or university degree

What is your current working situation?

- No job, looking for work
- No job, not looking for work
- Paid, full time work
- Paid, part time work
- Volunteer work
- Student (full or part-time)
- Retired

What is your main source of money?

- Paid work
- Disability benefits (i.e., CPP, ODSP)
- Welfare
- Family support
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Photovoice background**

How did you hear about Photovoice?

How much experience do you have with taking pictures?

- None
- Very little
- Some
- Moderate amount
- Quite a bit

Do you own a camera?

- No
- Yes (digital or regular?) \_\_\_\_\_

What do you hope to gain from being part of Photovoice?

Any worries or concerns about being part of Photovoice?



## WHAT MATTERS TO ME?

Think about: **WHERE YOU LIVE**, and **HOW YOU LIVE...**

*Things I am proud of...*

<b>Inside me:</b>	<b>Close to me:</b>	<b>Wider community:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ My accomplishments</li><li>○ Skills</li><li>○ Traits</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ My room / home / street</li><li>○ Friends, family</li><li>○ Where I spend time</li></ul>	

*Things that need to change...*

<b>Inside me:</b>	<b>Close to me:</b>	<b>Wider community:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Things I can improve</li><li>○ Things I want to do better</li><li>○ Things I want to stop doing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ My room / home / street</li><li>○ My relationships with others</li></ul>	

***Now, think of an image or picture that would tell this.***



## FEEDBACK SHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*(You do not have to write your name if you do not want to.)*

What was the **most** helpful thing in today's session?

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What was the **least** helpful thing in today's session?

---

---

---

How did you feel about today's session overall? (Comfortable? Not comfortable? OK? Encouraged?)

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---

---

Will you return to the next session?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Is there anything else you would like to share?

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***We appreciate your input!***



## CONSENT FORM 1

As a participant in Photovoice, you have the following rights and responsibilities:

### **Rights:**

- You have the right to express your views and experiences during the group sessions.
- You have the right to be supported by Photovoice group members and the facilitator.
- You have the right to choose the photographs you would like to display in public.
- You have the right to change your mind about displaying any of your photographs.

### **Responsibilities:**

- We will do our best to start the sessions on time, so we can finish on time. Please do your best to arrive promptly.
- Please contact the group facilitator or assistant if you cannot make it to a session.
- Be positive to your peers; please avoid putdowns or criticism.
- Since everyone has something important to say, only one person speaks at a time.
- You have the responsibility to ask subjects if they will consent to be in a photograph, before taking the photo.

Do you agree to the above rights and responsibilities as a participant of the Photovoice program?

Yes  
 No

Will you support the goals and values of the Photovoice program during your involvement?

Yes  
 No

***If you change your mind at any time, please contact your Photovoice group facilitator.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of photographer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## CONSENT FORM 2

You are invited to have your picture taken by one of the photographers involved with Photovoice Hamilton. Photovoice Hamilton is a project funded by the “Tackling Poverty Together” program of the Hamilton Community Foundation.

### **Photovoice has four goals:**

1. It helps people to record and think about their community’s strengths and problems.
2. It identifies important issues through group discussion and photographs.
3. It gets the attention of politicians and other decision makers.
4. It works toward positive change in our community.

Pictures taken in Photovoice will be shown to others in order to create awareness about the needs of those who are facing hard times. This may include gallery displays, presentations to decision-makers, and / or published on our website: [www.photovoice.ca](http://www.photovoice.ca). Others viewing the pictures may recognize you, but there are no names or contact information. Photographs will not be used to make money.

Please sign this form if you agree to have your photograph taken by a participant of Photovoice.

If you would like a copy of the photograph taken of you, please write down your address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Photographer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## TALKING TO PEOPLE

1) Friendly Greeting	"Hi there. How are you?"
2) Tell <b>briefly</b> about Photovoice	"I'm part of a project called Photovoice. We are trying to make things better in Hamilton by taking pictures. I want people to know about what matters to me, and hopefully my pictures can make a difference. We'll be showing these pictures at art galleries or even at city hall."
3) Ask permission  <i><b>If person says, "No", accept this, thank them, and move on!</b></i>	"Can I take a picture of you..." "Can I take a picture of your _____..."
4) Have person sign a consent form, if needed.	"Before taking your picture, I'll need you to sign this form."
5) Offer person a copy of the picture.	"If you write down your address, I can send you a copy of the picture."
6) Thank the person.	"Thanks for letting me take that picture. Watch for our picture display to be out in the next few months. It'll be announced in the newspaper."



## PHOTOVOICE GUIDELINES

### Stay Safe

- Don't take any risks.
- Don't go anywhere you wouldn't usually go, or do anything you wouldn't usually do.
- Take a friend.
- Be aware of what's around you.

### Be Respectful

- **Always ask first**, even if this means missing the perfect shot.
- You must have permission before taking pictures of people.
- Remember, the goal is to connect with others and share ideas. Don't upset people. This just gives the whole project a bad name.

### Large Crowds, Landscape or Scenery

- You do not need a Release Form if people are too small to be recognizable.
- It is still a good idea to ask permission before taking a picture of private property (someone's house or yard, for example).

### For Pictures with People

- Have your subjects sign a Release Form before taking any pictures.
- Be especially careful when taking pictures of children. Talk to the parents first, and have a parent sign a Release Form.
- Do not take pictures of people who are "in private", such as through a window into their home.
- Ask yourself, "Would I mind if someone took a picture of me in this situation?"
- Remember to offer the person a copy of the picture.



## WHAT DO I TAKE PICTURES OF?

***Photovoice is your chance to share your ideas about where you live and how you live. Some ideas to get you started...***

- What do you see in your everyday life? You could take your camera with you, and make a “photo essay” about a typical day for you. Afterwards, look at the pictures, and see what stands out for you.
- Pretend you are taking pictures to send to a pen pal from another part of the world. What would you want to share about yourself and where you live?
- Start with an opinion or idea. Have you ever wanted to write a letter to the editor of the newspaper? What would you say? Now, try to create a picture that gets your idea across.
- Make a collection of pictures showing all the things you are proud of in your city.
- Make a collection of pictures showing all the things about your city you are disappointed with.
- Use your emotions as a cue. Consider where you live and how you live... what gives you a strong emotional response (excited, angry, afraid, sad...)? Tell the story.
- Come up with a “theme” with your group. Everyone takes pictures that week of their ideas generated by the theme or topic.
- What do you contribute to your community? Do you make a difference? Show this in pictures.
- Spend some time really looking around you. Repeat the first item from this list (pictures of a typical day), or take a walk around your neighbourhood... only this time take pictures of things you have never noticed before.
- What is important to you? What is a big part of your life? Take pictures of objects, possessions, people, services, places...



## SHOWED

Name of Photographer \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Picture \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>S</b>	<b>“What is Seen here?” (Describe what the eye sees)</b> _____ _____ _____
<b>H</b>	<b>“What is really Happening?” (The unseen “story” behind the image)</b> _____ _____ _____
<b>O</b>	<b>“How does this relate to Our lives?” (Or MY life personally)</b> _____ _____ _____
<b>W</b>	<b>“Why are things this way?”</b> _____ _____ _____
<b>E</b>	<b>“How could this image Educate people?”</b> _____ _____ _____
<b>D</b>	<b>“What can I Do about it?” (What WILL I or WE do about it?)</b> _____ _____ _____



## COMMUNITY IMPACT TRACKING FORM

*The purpose of this form is to help keep track of issues that emerge over time. For example, one issue may be concerns about garbage in a certain area of the city; another may be celebration of hope that is inspired through supportive people in the community. Try to spend some time at the end of each photo sharing session identifying common themes or issues. Once you have a list of issues, you may want to prioritize 2-3 issues and identify actions that you could take to address each (e.g. writing a letter or scheduling a meeting with city councillors or planning a day when the group will go to clean up garbage in a certain area of the city). Even small steps toward change can make a big difference in feelings of empowerment among group members.*

Date	Issue	Action	Outcome



### CONSENT FORM 3

The purpose of Photovoice is to use pictures as a way of making those in power more aware of the needs of "the little guy" (people who are poor and/or who are facing hard times). Pictures taken in Photovoice may be shown in gallery displays, public shows, presentations to decision-makers, and/or published on our Photovoice website. They are used to create awareness about the needs of those who are facing hard times (i.e., due to lack of money, housing, illness or disability).

Are you willing to have your photographs used in public displays about Photovoice?

- Yes  
 No

Do you want your name listed as the photographer? [First names only]

- Yes  
 No

Please list any concerns:

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---

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***If you change your mind at any time, please call your Photovoice group facilitator [list phone #].***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of photographer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## POST-GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

### Photovoice Feedback

Of the \_\_\_ Photovoice group sessions, how many did you attend?

How would you rate your overall Photovoice experience?

- Poor
- OK
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent

Rate how much you enjoyed each of the following parts of Photovoice

	Poor			Excellent	
Learning about how to use the camera	1	2	3	4	5
Using the camera to take pictures	1	2	3	4	5
Thinking about the message in the photos	1	2	3	4	5
Writing out a caption for each picture	1	2	3	4	5
Discussing pictures as a group	1	2	3	4	5
Planning gallery display / final product	1	2	3	4	5
Communicating ideas to decision makers	1	2	3	4	5
Receiving support from other about ideas	1	2	3	4	5

How could we change Photovoice to make it better?

Would you recommend Photovoice to others?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you for your participation!***

## SOCIAL ACTION

6

Social action is central to the Photovoice philosophy. Taking pictures is important but making sure those pictures educate and inspire people in the community is critical. There are a couple avenues for making sure Photovoice has an impact. Media, politicians and other opportunities for community exposure are the key to the success of a Photovoice project.



## TRACKING COMMUNITY IMPACT

**Purpose: to keep a record of the issues raised by Photovoice participants when they are discussing their photos.**

Since Photovoice is ultimately about making positive social change, this form can help group members to identify issues that are important to them. It is a way of brainstorming about actions that could be taken to address the issue. Get the group involved in this process since the idea is to empower them to move beyond passive identification of problems, to realizing that they can effect change.

For example, if the picture is of graffiti - the issue might be that they see this as a form of vandalism and they want to see police addressing the issue of crime in their neighbourhood. The action may be to connect with a police officer to find out what they are doing about vandalism.

Another picture of graffiti might be seen as a creative outlet for youth. Perhaps the issue is identified as lack of space or opportunity for youth to express themselves. The action therefore might be linking with politicians to talk about the need to create programs for youth.

As the facilitator, make sure you leave time to talk about social action. Pinpointing issues that people have in common and positive actions that can be taken may be one of the hardest parts of your role. It is important, however, in changing the way people think about their situation.

***After the session, facilitators should fill out the Community Impact Tracking Form (see page 38)***

## MEDIA

Engaging the media is a powerful way to get the Photovoice message into the public domain. Media can be engaged at any point in the process. The final result (i.e. the final show or action) is an obvious choice for media engagement, but why not make them part of the process? Ask local media sources if they'd like to shadow a participant photographer for a few hours or attend one of the photo-sharing sessions (with express permission from the participants, of course). At the outset of the Photovoice project, connect with some local media allies in your community. Is there a television reporter who is especially into arts? Is there a beat reporter who does special interest stories about poverty? Start a relationship with them at the beginning of your project and let them know when newsworthy events are happening.

For the final product (show or otherwise) for which you want a lot of media attention, you'll want to do a media advisory and press release. A media advisory is essentially a 'heads up' that an event is taking place and should be sent 3-4 days in advance. It should not contain a lot of information, just the bare necessities. A press release is sent the day before and sometimes the morning of the event. It should have more information and should read as if it could be published or read as is. An example of both a media advisory and press release are attached.

In order to get the contact information for your local media outlets, check their websites.

## POLITICIANS

Since the intent of Photovoice is to link people who face marginalization with people who have decision-making power, politicians are important to engage. Politicians may be invited to the show or end result of a Photovoice project or may attend a session to hear concerns and ideas from participants. You may even wish to supply the politician with a camera and ask him/her to share photographs with the participants around a certain theme. Write a letter inviting a local politician to a Photovoice event and follow up by phone.

### **To contact local politicians:**

In Hamilton the contact information for municipal councillors can be found online at:

<http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/YourElectedOfficials/CityCouncillors/>

Members of Provincial Parliament can be found at:

[http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/members/members\\_current.do?locale=en](http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/members/members_current.do?locale=en)

Members of Parliament can be found at:

<http://webinfo.parl.gc.ca/MembersOfParliament/MainMPsCompleteList.aspx?TimePeriod=Current&Language=E>

## WHERE TO SHOW PHOTOS

Photovoice participants are encouraged throughout the process to decide what the end result of their picture taking should be. This should be something that captures the interest of decision-makers and the community at large. It is meant to be inspiring, to compel people to learn more about an issue, or to act in some way. Some ideas for showing pictures include:

- An art show. Local libraries, community development organizations, government buildings, art galleries, union halls, schools, recreation centres might all be possible venues for a show. Have an event on the opening night to bring people together with the photographers. Invite the photographers to say a few words about Photovoice and the process.
- Web presence. Ensure that all photos are on your website to reach a broad audience.
- Create a zine or a blog. A zine is a small, inexpensively produced publication. A blog is like a journal online.
- Take the photographs to a City Council meeting.
- Connect with local research and community groups. If they have a publication coming out related to a Photovoice issue, maybe they can use some photographs in the design.

***When discussing the use of photos for exhibition with the participants, ask them to fill out Consent 3 if they would like their photos displayed. (see page 39)***

***Finally, once the group meets for the last time, please have participants fill out the Post-Group Questionnaire. This will help give ideas on where to make changes and what to keep for future programs. (see page 40)***

## RESOURCE LIST

7

Strack, R. W., Magill, C. & McDonagh, K. (2004). Engaging youth through Photovoice. *Health Promotion Practice*, 5(1), 49-58

Wang, C. C. & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education and Behavior*, 24(3), 369-387

Wang, C. C., Morrel-Samuels, S., Hutchison, P. M., Bell, L., & Pestronk, R. M. (2004). Flint Photovoice: Community building among youths, adults, and policymakers. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94(6), 911-913

Wang, C. C. & Redwood-Jones, Y. (2001). Photovoice ethics: Perspectives from Flint Photovoice. *Health Education and Behavior*, 28(5), 560-572

[www.photovoice.com/method/index\\_com.htm/](http://www.photovoice.com/method/index_com.htm/)