

What is Informed Consent?

Informed consent is a process in which researchers make sure that participants understand what they are agreeing to when they participate in a study. This is especially important when the research involves recording voices or images because it raises issues of privacy and personal freedom.

Why is Informed Consent Important?

When psychologists record participants, they need to ensure that the participants are fully aware of how their data (like voices and images) will be used. This is crucial to protect their rights and avoid any potential harm or discomfort. Informed consent ensures transparency and ethical treatment of participants.

When is Informed Consent Required?

According to the policy, informed consent must be obtained from participants unless one of the following scenarios is true:

- **Naturalistic Observations:** If the research involves observing people in public places (like parks or streets) where it is not expected that the recordings will identify individuals or cause them any harm, consent may not be necessary. This is because the participants are in a public setting where they might have a lower expectation of privacy.
- **Deception in Research:** In some studies, researchers might use deception (like not fully explaining the purpose of the study beforehand) to achieve their research goals. If this is the case and recordings are made, the researchers must inform participants about the recordings during a debriefing after the study. Only then can they obtain consent for using those recordings.

Final Thoughts

Understanding informed consent in research is essential, especially for young adults like you who may be starting to engage in research or participating in studies. It protects your rights and ensures ethical practices in the field of psychology.