**FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**NOTE 1:** The included information should be in layman’s terms to be easily understood by the participants. In this sense, acronyms should be avoided.

**NOTE 2:** This document must be available in any language chosen by the participants and these versions submitted to the REB for approval.

**NOTE 3:** Eliminate any section that is not relevant to the research activity.

**NOTE 4:** This document is a basic outline. Add any information likely to improve understanding.

**NOTE 5:** Remove all notes from this document.

1. **Research activity title**
2. **Research team**

**Principal Investigator**

First name, last name:

Title (e.g., professor, student (level)):

Institution and department:

Phone number:

Email address:

**Research team member at the NCS (if different)**

First name, last name :

Position held :

Title :

Phone number:

Email address :

**Under the supervision of (for students)**

First name, last name :

Title :

Institution and department:

Phone number:

Email address:

**NOTE:** Include the first and last names of any other research team members (co-researchers, collaborators, professionals, and research assistants) as well as their title and home institution.

1. **Research activity funding**

This research activity is funded by:

1. **Conflict of interests**

The research team, the National Circus School and [name of funder(s)] have no real, potential or perceived conflict of interests in the context of this research activity.

**NOTE:** If there is a conflict of interests on the part of one of the parties, indicate who or what the conflict is and how it will be managed.

1. **Preamble**

We invite you to participate to a research activity that aims to [major objective of the project].

**However, before agreeing to participate in this activity and to sign this free and informed consent form, please take the time to read the information presented.**

We invite you to ask all the questions that you deem useful to the person in charge of the research activity at the National Circus School or to any other member of the research team, and to ask them to explain any word or information that is not clear. We also invite you to seek advice from anyone else from whom you may wish to seek advice about your possible participation.

1. **General presentation of the research project**

The main objectives of the activity we are carrying out are as follows:

To achieve these objectives, we will: [briefly explain the major steps of your activity in simple terms that are understandable to the uninitiated while avoiding acronyms or initials. Indicate what you hope to demonstrate and what will be required of the participants as well as their expected numbers].

1. **Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

For this activity, we are looking to recruit individuals who have : [describe the criteria that specifically qualify and the criteria that disqualify individuals].

1. **Nature and duration of your participation in the research activity**

Describe the activities in which individuals will participate in a simple and understandable manner, including their quantity, duration, and topics, one activity per paragraph. Also indicate whether participants agree to have their participation recorded [yes or no]. Describe any transcript process.

1. **Risks and disadvantages**

If the research activity does not entail any particular risk, write: This research activity is not expected to entail any greater risks than those you encounter in your everyday life.

If the research activity involves one or more specific risks, write: Your participation in this research project involves certain risks [list them including physical, psychological, social, legal, hierarchical, family, economic, computer risks, etc. , and indicating their nature, magnitude and likelihood].

To reduce the risks associated with this research project, the team plans to [indicate how the risks will be minimized].

Describe the main inconveniences (e.g., travel, length of an interview) and the planned mitigation measures.

1. **Advantages and benefits**

Indicate the anticipated personal advantages and benefits for the participants. Compensation is not an advantage or a benefit.

If no direct personal advantages or benefits are anticipated, write: you will not derive any personal benefit from your participation in this research activity. However, your participation will help advance the state of knowledge in the area of [specify area].

1. **Financial compensation**

Indicate the nature, terms and conditions of the compensation. The compensation aims to ensure that the costs associated with participation are not borne by the participants.

If incentives are used, indicate, describe and justify.

1. **Voluntary participation and withdrawal**

Your participation in this research activity is voluntary. You are therefore free to refuse to participate and can, at any time, decide to withdraw from it without having to justify your decision and without risking prejudice. You only need to inform the research team's contact person. It might be by verbal notice if preferred.

If the data can be withdrawn when a participant withdraw write: In the event of withdrawal, you can request that your data be destroyed. However, it will not be possible to remove your data or material from the analyses conducted once they have been published or released.

If data cannot be removed when a participant withdraw, write: Please note that it will be impossible to remove your data [explain why].

Throughout the research activities, you will receive timely information relevant to your participation.

The research team and the research ethics board reserve the right to withdraw you from the study if you do not comply with the instructions, if there are administrative reasons to abandon the activity, or for any other reason concerning the feasibility of the study. If such a situation arises, the research team will inform you as soon as possible.

1. **Confidentiality and protection of your data**

The research team will collect and record all your data in a secure manner in accordance with Canadian law to protect its confidentiality.

Here is how we will protect your data during collection: [indicate the direct or indirect identifiers of the data and the physical and computer protection measures used].

**NOTE**: There is a significant difference between coded, anonymized and anonymous data. For example, coded data is not anonymous data. For coding, the alphanumeric method is by far preferable to pseudonymization (e.g., giving another name to the participants as well as to a location).

Here is how we will protect your data during analysis and transfer of data between team members: [indicate the direct or indirect identifiers of the data and the physical and computer protection measures used].

Here is how we will protect your data during publication: [indicate the direct or indirect identifiers of the data and the physical and computer protection measures used].

Finally, here is how we will protect your data after the research project:

* Indicate if there will be a transcript and what will be done with the recordings.
* Indicate how long participant’s data will be retained by the research team after the research project ends.
* Indicate whether the data will be unrestricted, and the disclosure requirements associated with the research data management strategy.
* Indicate the direct or indirect identifying nature of the data and the physical and computer protection measures that will be taken.

In the case of focus groups, it is relevant to remind research participants of the following statement: We invite you to exercise discretion to maintain the confidentiality of the focus group discussions. Therefore, we ask that you do not divulge what was said during the focus group to individuals who did not participate.

You have the right to consult your research file to verify the accuracy of the information collected for as long as the research team or the National Circus School hold this information. However, to preserve the scientific integrity of the research project, some information will only be accessible at the end of the research project.

1. **Dissemination of research results**

Indicate how participants will be informed of research results.

1. **Compensation in the event of damage and rights of participants**

Should you suffer any damages because of your participation in this research activity, you do not waive any of your rights or release the researchers, the funding organization or the National Circus School from their legal and professional responsibilities.

1. **Contacts**

Should you have any questions regarding the scientific aspects of the research project or to withdraw from the study, you can contact: [indicate the name of the person in charge of the project at the NCS and how to reach him/her].

For any concerns about your rights or the responsibilities of the research team with regards to your participation in this project, you can contact the Research Ethics Board by email at [cer@enc.qc.ca](mailto:cer@enc.qc.ca).

1. **Consent to participate in the research project**

**NOTE:** Consent must be recorded following the information provided and not on a separate page.

1. I have read the enclosed information describing the nature and conduct of the project as well as the risks and inconveniences that may arise.
2. I understand that I am entitled to satisfactory answers to any question I may have regarding my involvement in this project initially as well as throughout my participation.
3. I agree to participate freely in this project, having obtained satisfactory responses and taken the time to reflect on it to my satisfaction and without having been pressured to do so.
4. I understand that by participating in this research project, I am not waiving any of my rights or releasing the researchers from their responsibilities.
5. I understand that I can consult the file that the research team is building on me.
6. I may at any time, upon simple notice from me, reconsider my decision to participate and will then be immediately released from my consent.
7. I have received a copy of this document.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Participant's first and last name  (Print) |  | Participant's signature |
|  |  | Date : |

1. **Research team commitment**

I confirm that I or my representative have explained to the above-mentioned person the nature of their participation in this research activity, asked if they had any questions, answered their questions. We have made it clear that they remain free to participate and to end their participation at any time, by simple verbal notice. I agree, with the research team, to respect the terms described in this free and informed consent form and declare that I have given a signed copy to the person.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| First and last name of research team member at NCS  (Print) |  | Signature of that person |
|  |  | Date : |
|  |  |  |

Note: This document is largely inspired, with permission, by a similar document used at Polytechnique Montréal in 2022.