



## *best practices: survivors*

### **Best Practices: Survivor Testimonials**

#### **Utilize trauma-informed, survivor-centered practices**

- Avoid soliciting stories from survivors who aren't ready to share
- Consider providing a counselor or an advocate for the process
- Be flexible: encourage survivors to tell their stories, when, where and how they want to

#### **Utilize a participant informed consent form**

- Inform they may choose not to participate, can stop at any time
- Discuss the potential dangers and benefits of telling their story
- Ensure the consent form is written down and signed like a contract

#### **For persons under 18, avoid identifiable information**

- If children can't consent to other potentially harmful decisions, consider whether they can consent to sharing their story publicly

#### **Respect and honor the survivor's expertise**

- Give the survivor power in the process of telling their story
- Treat the survivor like you would treat other professionals
- Get consent every time you use the story
- Compensate the survivor for his/her/their expertise

### **Agencies thinking about having a survivor share their story should consider several questions**

- Why am I asking this survivor to share their story?
- Is there another way to accomplish this same goal?
- Who benefits more from telling this story, the survivor or my agency?
- Where is this survivor at in their recovery process? Will re-telling their story cause emotional harm or be re-traumatizing?
- Are they developmentally, mentally, and emotionally, able to consider the consequences of their story?
- What affects might this have on the survivor both long and short term?
- Is the survivor aware of these long and short-term effects?
- Does the survivor have the proper emotional and social support to cope with possible side effects?
- Is the survivor being manipulated or do they feel pressured to share their story?
- How is the survivor being compensated for their time and for sharing their story? Are they being compensated in a manner that you would expect for sharing your expertise?

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