

# Designing Participatory Visual Methods for Online Spaces



The setting of your photovoice or digital storytelling project, whether online or in person, has an impact on how you design your project. Produced in partnership between the Centre for Community Based Research and Trillium Health Partners - Institute for Better Health, this infographic highlights promising practices for designing photovoice or digital storytelling projects in online settings. The infographic was developed based on findings from a CIHR-funded research project that gathered experiences of health researchers adapting in-person participatory visual methods (PVM) to online and hybrid environments with diverse communities.

Note: In this context, participants in PVM projects are considered co-researchers.

## When designing your online PVM project, consider the following:

### Facilitating Online Spaces

How many facilitators will you need for your online digital storytelling or photovoice project? What digital competencies or training do they need upfront?

How might group and power dynamics play out in the online environment? (e.g., how will you account for establishing trust in your design? Will you record the session or not?)

What are potential facilitation challenges in the online environment, and how can you manage them upfront? (e.g., access to platforms, devices and technical issues, connecting from home and sharing sensitive topics, etc. )

### Communication & Support

What communication strategies can your project implement to keep groups engaged during and in between workshops?

Sharing art online may be challenging. What debrief processes will your project set up for the team members (co-researchers and facilitators)?

How will you support co-researchers to engage in art-making and co-creating safer virtual spaces online?

## Promising practices for planning & preparing for your online project:

### Logistics prep

Set up an online folder/storage system for shared project resources

Create clear communication channels, seamless check-in, and rehearsals with co-researchers

Be creative about strategies that build connectivity online (e.g., delivery of snacks in advance, interactive icebreakers)

Plan for shorter sessions with smaller co-researchers groups

“[Participants] might be walking in thinking no one can possibly relate to what I experienced, to how it has affected me. And so then it becomes so important that they hear from each other. So we've had to adjust the timing of our sessions to make it possible for everyone to hear everyone else's stories. So we'll maybe do a story circle over two sessions, do half the stories at one and then half at the other and then move on to something else.”

- Rani Sanderson,  
Executive Director,  
StoryCentre Canada

### Team prep

Create opportunities for co-researchers to co-create group norms at the beginning a project (e.g., cameras off/on, respectful communication )

Train facilitators and co-researchers specifically on online facilitation skillsets

Be transparent about the time commitment required for online project

“Involving [co-researchers] in the training is really important. And then in debriefs after the sessions, right? How did it go? How did you think it went? What do we do next time/? So that they [co-researchers] are an integral part of those conversations.”

- Laura Lorenz, Co-founder  
& Educator, Photovoice  
Worldwide Inc



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