# SAMPLE ASSENT FORM (13-17) FOR FOCUS GROUP

## (STUDY TITLE)

We are asking you to participate in a research project being conducted by (*name*), a (*faculty member, staff member, graduate student, undergraduate student*) in the Department of (*name*) at the University of Maine. *If the principal investigator is a student, also name the faculty sponsor, their title, and their department.* The purpose of the research is \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

### What Will You Be Asked to Do?

If you want to participate, you will be asked to participate in a focus group. It will take about (*amount of time*) to participate. There will be about X other people in the focus group. *If multiple focus groups, state the number of sessions, time commitment for each, and total time commitment.* *If the procedures are numerous, we suggest you use bullets to make the form easier to read.* *If the focus group(s) will be recorded via Zoom or audio recorded using a handheld recorder, state that in this section. State here if it is a requirement of participation that the focus group be recorded OR if handwritten or typed notes would be taken should any participant not agree to the recording.*

### Risks

*Note that there is always some risk, at minimum the participant’s time and inconvenience. Listed below are examples.*

- Other than your time and inconvenience, there are no risks to you participating in this study.

***Or***

- You might be uncomfortable answering some of the questions. You can skip any questions that make you uncomfortable*. Provide referral resources if questions are very sensitive, e.g., depression, suicide, etc. Referral resources may include the child’s school guidance counselors, National Hotlines, etc. Either include the resources within the consent, or reference to resource information (i.e. see referral handout).*

### **Benefits**

***Two*** *benefit statements are required – benefit to participant* (*if any*) *and potential benefit of the research. Listed below are examples.* ***Note: Compensation is* not *a benefit.***

- While this study will have no direct benefit to you, this research may help us learn more about…

- You could learn better ways to cope with everyday stress. In addition, this research may help us learn more about…

### Compensation

*If you are not offering compensation, leave this section out.*

*List (1) the type and amount of compensation, (2) what qualifies participants for the compensation, and (3) when/how compensation is awarded.*

*Below are examples:*

***Note:******See Item #8 on checklist for additional guidance if compensation exceeds $75****.*

- You will receive $X for participating in this study. You must stay for the entire duration focus group in order to receive this compensation. You will receive your compensation in the form of a Visa gift card at the end of the focus group session.

- You may enter a raffle to win *one of two $25 Amazon gift cards*. You must stay for the entire duration focus group in order to enter the raffle. Winners of the raffle will be notified and receive their gift card via email no later than XXXX *(date).*

### Confidentiality

*Sample for when data are confidential, i.e., names are connected to data, typically by use of a code/key.* ***Note:*** *This is a sample; it may not fit your study. For example, a key may not be necessary in studies where there is no follow-up planned or in which the data is not sensitive. The important aspect is to tell people how the data will be kept to ensure confidentiality and how long it will be kept – or to inform that that it won’t be kept confidential, as in the case with some studies* (*e.g., oral histories*)*.*

Your name will not be on any of the data. A number will be used to protect you. A key linking your name to the data will be kept separate from the data in a locked office(*if paper*)and destroyed by (*date*). *If a key will be kept electronically, explain that it will be stored on a password-protected computer using software that provides additional security.* Data will be kept on a password protected computer and kept (*indefinitely or destroyed by date*). *Specifically address the retention of any audio, video, or film recordings. If the focus group will be recorded via Zoom, state that recordings will be removed from Zoom within 72 hours. If the focus group will be recorded via a handheld device, state when those will be removed from the device. If handwritten notes will be taken, explain the retention and destruction of those notes. List others who may have access to data, such as faculty advisor and/or others working on the project. If a transcription service will be used* (*instead of named researchers*)*, include that information.* Your name or identity will not be known to anyone other than the researchers. Due to the focus group format, I cannot guarantee that others will keep responses confidential but participants will be asked not to talk about the research outside of the group.

### Voluntary

You do not have to participate in this study and no one will be upset if you choose not to participate. If you want to take part in this study, you can skip any questions and stop whenever you want. *Explain whether stopping will alter compensation to be received, e.g., “… stop at any time, but you must stay for the entire focus group to enter the raffle; “While you may skip the occasional question, you must stay for the entire duration of the focus group to receive compensation.”*

### Contact Information

If you want to know about this study, you can contact me at (*phone, e-mail*). You can also contact my faculty advisor at (*phone, e-mail*). If you have any questions about being a research participant, you can contact the Office of Research Compliance, University of Maine, 207-581-2657 (or e-mail [umric@maine.edu](mailto:umric@maine.edu)).

### Assent Statement

*It may be appropriate to ask for oral assent in studies where the risk is minimal i.e. educational focus groups in school. In these cases, researchers should document that they have received oral assent in a way they find appropriate. If oral assent is appropriate for your study, continue with the following section:*

Would you like to be in my project?

***Or***

*If documented assent from the minor participant is appropriate for your study and you* ***do not intend*** *on using any videos/photographs for educational purposes or in presentations/publications, continue with the following section:*

I agree to participate in this study.

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Your Name (Printed) Date

***Or***

*If documented assent from the minor participant is appropriate for your study and you* ***do intend*** *on using any videos/photographs for educational purposes or in presentations/publications, continue with the following section:*

I  **DO NOT** /  **I DO** want video/photographs of me in this study to be used or shared outside of the research.)

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Your Name (Printed) Date