

Ethical Code of Conduct



Witness Change works to increase empathy and agency, reduce stigma and improve the lives of people whose stories we amplify. It is essential that our vision, mission and values are understood, supported and demonstrated by the staff, board, advisory committee, volunteers and other representatives. If any of us fails to act in a way that is consistent with our values and principles, then we fail as an organization.

Ethical Code Of Conduct

As a representative of Witness Change, you are expected to promote its values and principles and protect its reputation by:

- Maintaining high standards of personal and professional conduct including respecting the basic rights of others by acting fairly, honestly and tactfully, and by treating all people with dignity and respect, no matter their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, psychosocial, intellectual and cognitive disabilities, age, race, ethnicity, economic status, political conviction, culture or religion.
- Respecting the autonomy and the right to informed consent of a person sitting for a portrait and/or someone sharing their story (storyteller). Consent should be received, whenever possible and reasonable, in written or video form from those being photographed, their guardian(s) or representative(s). Use standard journalism practices when deciding if consent is necessary i.e. consent is not necessary for large groups, in public places like on the street, when exposing a human rights abuser, for public figures, etc. Witness Change will be provided proof of consent before the end of any project.
- Protecting the safety and well-being of yourself and others.
- Regularly evaluating the effects of your activities. We are accountable to our stakeholders.
- Making no claim to compensation not previously agreed upon by Witness Change in writing.
- Accurately representing participants by verifying the spelling of names and respecting self identifiers (i.e. pronouns, gender, identity, sexual orientation, etc.) of all of those sharing their story.
- Striving to report truthfully and honestly by genuinely depicting reality

Witness Change therefore does not tolerate the following:

- We do not pay storytellers for interviews, to take their photographs or to film or record them.
- **Quoting:** You can not make up or change a quote.
 - Readers should be able to assume that every word between quotation marks is what the speaker or writer said. Witness Change does not "clean up" quotations.
 - If an interviewee names a third party (i.e. friend), confirm that their real name can be used. On sensitive subjects (i.e. sexuality) do not use the full name of a third party, unless you have the third party's consent.
- **Photography and Images:** You can not set up a reportage picture.
 - Nothing in our published projects, exhibitions, stories on social media, internal or external reports — words, photos, graphics, sound or video — may be fabricated by a Witness Change storyteller. With the exception of portraiture, we don't stage photographs. We do not re-enact events for the camera or microphone, and we don't use sound effects or substitute video or audio from one event to another. We do not "cheat" sound by adding audio to embellish or fabricate an event. No people or objects may be added, rearranged, reversed, distorted or removed from a scene (except for the recognized practice of cropping to omit extraneous outer portions).
 - No video/audio may be staged in any way, or manipulated in such a way as to distort or misrepresent or otherwise portray a person, place, or situation in an untrue, misleading or inaccurate manner.
- **Post production:** Adjustments of color or gray scale should be limited to those minimally necessary for clear and accurate reproduction, analogous to the "burning" and "dodging" that formerly took place in darkroom processing of images. Use of tools such as "cloning" are strictly forbidden. Cropping must not be done in a way that changes the intent/meaning of the original situation.

No Ethical Code of Conduct can prejudge every situation, thus common sense and good judgement are required in applying ethical principles. If you are unsure of how to respond to a specific situation, contact Witness Change staff for advice.

By signing this code, you recognize the existence of the framework document and commit to the standards and values it embodies, as well as the responsibility to be aware and alert, and to signal and report possible conflicting behaviour to Witness Change management.

I hereby certify I have read and understood the content of the Witness Change Ethical Code of Conduct

Signature

Name

Date