[All instructions and comments are in brackets and highlighted yellow, and examples are in italics. Remove these from actual consent document. Make additional adjustments as appropriate for the specific research study. The language used in this form should be at approximately the 6th grade level or lower so that it can be used with individuals who may have limited reading skills. You can check the reading level of your consent form within Microsoft Word or using another readability tool online.]

YOUTH ASSENT FORM

**STUDY TITLE: [Insert Study Title]**

**Why are we meeting with you?**

I am asking you and other teenagers to take part in a research study. A research study is a way to learn more about something. You are being asked to join this research study because [insert condition/reason for inclusion]. After we tell you about it, we will ask if you’d like to be in this study or not.

This form may have some words that you do not know. Please ask someone to explain any words that you do not know. You may take this form home to think about and talk to your parents about before you decide if you want to be in this study. [Rewording may be necessary for youth in facilities.]

You do not have to be in this study. It is up to you.

**What is this study about?**

The purpose of this research study is to [Briefly describe the purpose of the study using language a young person would understand.]

[Explain your relationship with DJJ as part of this study as appropriate.]

**What will happen to me if I choose to be in this study?**

In this study you will be asked to:

[Describe what participation in this study will entail for participants, including how long the study will last and approximately how many participants will participate in this study. *Example: In this study you will be asked to go to two group meetings. Each meeting will be about an hour. In each meeting, you will be in a group with 8 or 9 other teenagers. In the first meeting, you will be asked to talk about…*]

[Provide examples of the types of questions you will be asking/content that will be discussed. *Example: In the second meeting you will be asked to talk about…*]

[Describe what and how information will be collected. *Example: The meetings will be tape recorded so we are sure to get everyone’s ideas. We will not record names on the tape.*]

If you decide to be in this research study, you will be asked to sign this form. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you.

**Will any parts of this study make me feel bad?**

[It is not acceptable to state there are no risks.Possible psychological risks or discomforts must be noted and how they will be handled. Also include the risk of loss of privacy or confidentiality. *Example*: *Sometimes talking about these things makes people upset. You do not have to talk about anything you do not want to talk about. You can leave the group at any time. If you do become upset, the people running the group will help you. Being in this research study may also mean someone could find out information about you that you don’t want them to know, like that you are on probation.*]

[If study is longitudinal or interventional, include this statement.] We will let you know if we find out something during this study that may make you change your mind about participating.

**How will this study help me?**

[Describe any benefits to the participant. Do not include compensation in this section. Instead, describe any positive things, if any, that participants may learn, experience, or feel. You also may describe the broader benefits of the study that relate to them. *Examples: This study may help you by…, We may learn more about helping other youth who…*]

[In accordance with 45 CFR 46 Part C] Being in this study will not affect how you are treated in either the juvenile or adult justice systems. It will not help or hurt your sentencing, length of stay, or parole.

**What do I get if I am in this study?**

[If you are paying for participation or giving gifts, you must be very specific as to the amount and how it will be paid. If the study involves ongoing participation, explain what happens if the participant withdraws partway through. Example: You get a $5.00 gift certificate to the mall for each time you come to the group. The $5.00 gift certificate will be given at the end of each session, and you will receive the gift certificate even if you stop during the session. You may receive a total of $15.00 if you participate in all three sessions.]

**Will you tell anyone what I say?**

We will be collecting information about you. This information will include [Example: surveys, interview notes and recordings, audiotapes of consultations and interviews]. [Explain how data will be stored/destroyed as is appropriate for the study and the participants. If you are audio recording a session you must specify how you will protect the information you are recording. All explanations need to be age- and reading-level appropriate.]

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us. We will not share your answers with your teachers, parents, friends, or [add appropriate DJJ staff. Examples: your probation officer, the staff at the facility.]. However, other members of your group will know what you say [include if a focus group or other group setting].

What we find out in the study and this signed form may be looked at or copied by the group paying for this study [only include sponsor if appropriate] and the place where we work ([name of university or organization]). We will also share what we find out in the study with the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), but we will not tell them your name. [Adjust language if DJJ will have access to copies of the assent/consent forms or have knowledge of the participant roster. This information must be disclosed. Be sure to comply with 45 CFR Part C].

[In accordance with 45 CFR 46 Part C, as appropriate for the specific study] We will not tell anyone that you are a juvenile offender, but if you have to go to adult jail or prison, we cannot promise that your adult placement will be kept secret.

If you tell us that someone is hurting you, the law says that we have to let other people know so they can help you. If you tell us that you might hurt yourself or someone else, we have to let people know.

[If research will have a Certificate of Confidentiality, insert additional language to explain the protections and limitations.]

[Be sure to check any other required disclosures or protections based on funding source, federal or state law, or other reason (e.g., future criminal intent for studies funded by Department of Justice / National Institute of Justice, educational records, medical records / health information, data repositories or registries).]

If we talk about this study in speeches or in writing, we will never use your name.

**Do I have to be in this study?**

You do not have to be in this study. It is up to you. You will still get all the same treatment, services, and privileges from DJJ if you decide not to be in the study.

[List any alternatives, including participating in the program without being part of the research component, if appropriate. Example: You do not have to participate in this study to be able to participate in the class. Also explain what will happen if they decide not to participate. Example: If you decide not to be in the study, you will have free time in the unit while others talk to the researchers.]

You can also say okay now and change your mind later. You may stop at any time. All you have to do is tell us you want to stop. No one will blame or criticize you if you drop out of the study.You will still get all the same treatment, services, and privileges from DJJ if you stop being in the study.

If you want to stop the study before it is over, [insert any consequences or risks of a participant’s decision to withdraw from the research and procedures for orderly termination of participation, if any].

[In accordance with 45 CFR 46 Part C, as appropriate for the specific study] If you are detained during this study, you may not be able to continue. [If the participants are already confined, adjust wording as appropriate for the scenario (e.g., “incarcerated as an adult,” “incarcerated in a different facility”). If participation is contingent on being in the facility, more explanation may be necessary to describe what happens if they are released or transferred during the study.]

There may be other reasons that you would need to stop being in the study [include examples, if appropriate].

**Do you have any questions?**

You can ask questions at any time. You can ask now or later. If you have questions later, just tell the researcher or ask your parent or another adult to call: [Adjust wording for a correctional setting.]

[List the name of the contact person and their contact information here.]

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or have a problem with the research study, ask your parent or another adult to call: [Adjust wording for a correctional setting.]

[List the IRB contact information here.]

Before you say **yes or no** to being in this study, we will answer any questions you have now. What questions do you have?

Do not sign this form if you have more questions. Be sure someone answers your questions.

**If you don’t want to be in this study, just say no and don’t sign this form.**

[Format so the remaining section is on one page with all signature lines.]

**Assent:**

I have read this form. I understand the information. I agree to participate in this research study.

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Youth Participant Name (Printed)

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Youth Participant Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Conducting Informed Assent Discussion (Printed)

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Signature of Person Conducting Informed Assent Discussion Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator Signature Date