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Smartphone filmmaking for field research

University of Leeds

Introduction

- Who am I?
- What are we covering today?
 - Why video matters
 - Introduction to filming
 - Sound recording
 - Technical information
 - Practical exercise
 - Reflections



Why video matters in research

- Richer dissemination outputs
 - Short research case study films
 - Promoting your research
 - Conferences
 - Teaching
 - Project website, academic profile



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Why video matters in research

- Interdisciplinary communication
 - Shared language



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Why video matters in research

- Providing context
 - Place
 - People
 - Process



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Why video matters in research

- Sharing research beyond academia
 - Policymakers
 - Community groups
 - NGOs and charities
 - Industry partners
 - Research participants
 - General public



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Why video matters in research

- Accessibility and openness
 - Visual explanations
 - Wider audiences



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Why video matters in research

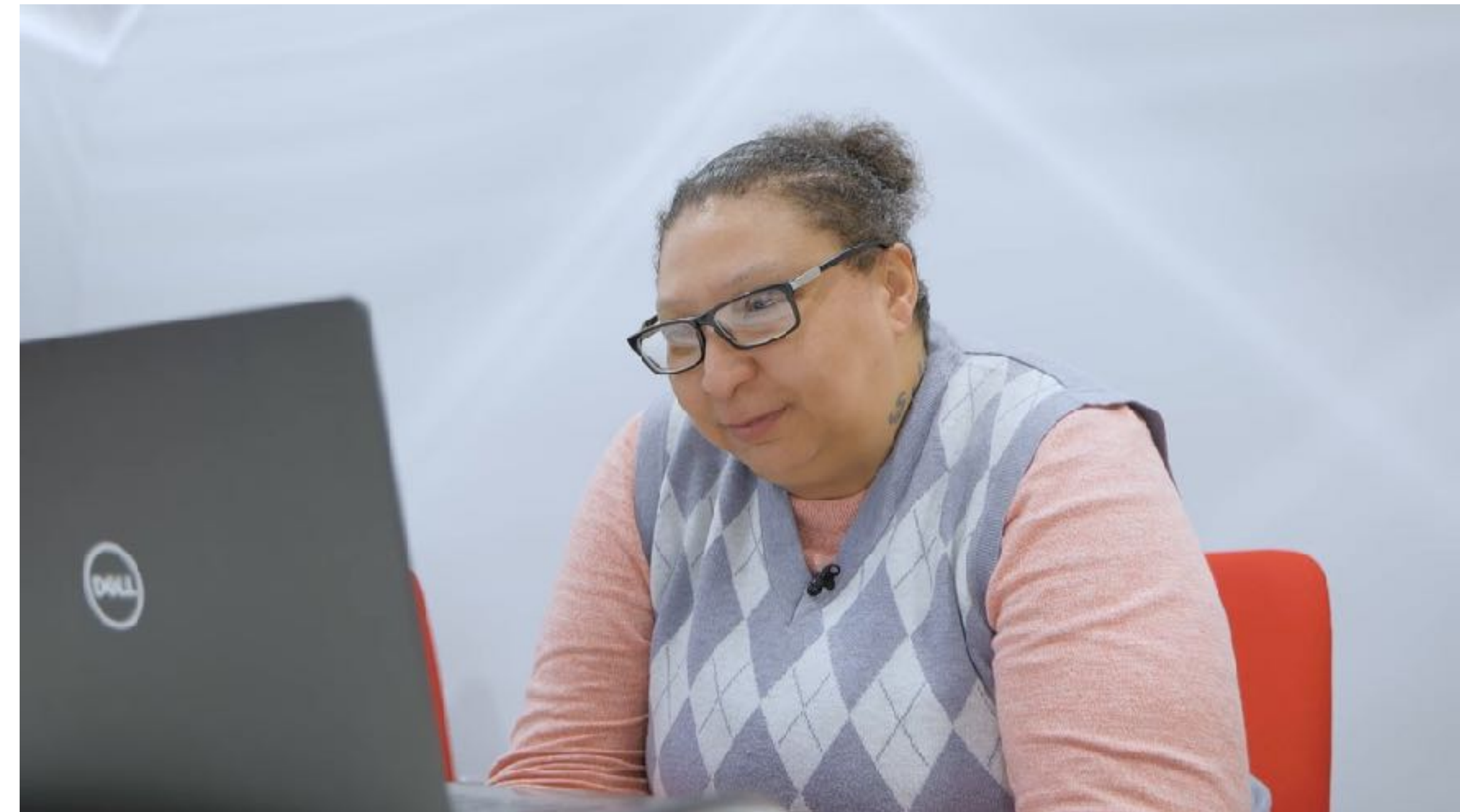
- Building trust
 - Transparency
 - Respect for participants' voices
 - Relationships with communities



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Understanding the workflow

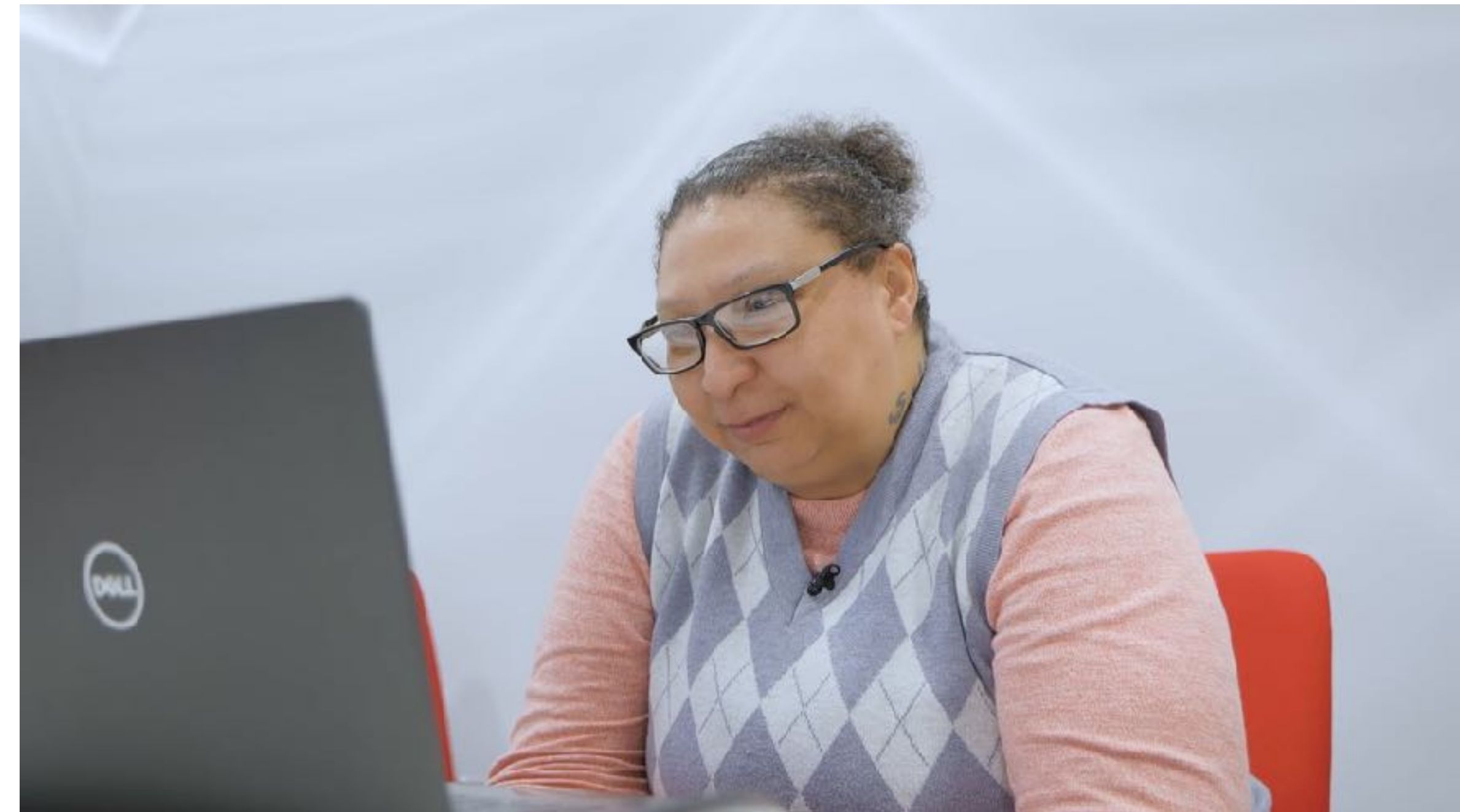
- Planning and scripting
 - What is the video trying to communicate?
 - Who is the audience?
 - What are the key messages?
 - What locations or situations?
 - What questions will you ask?



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Understanding the workflow

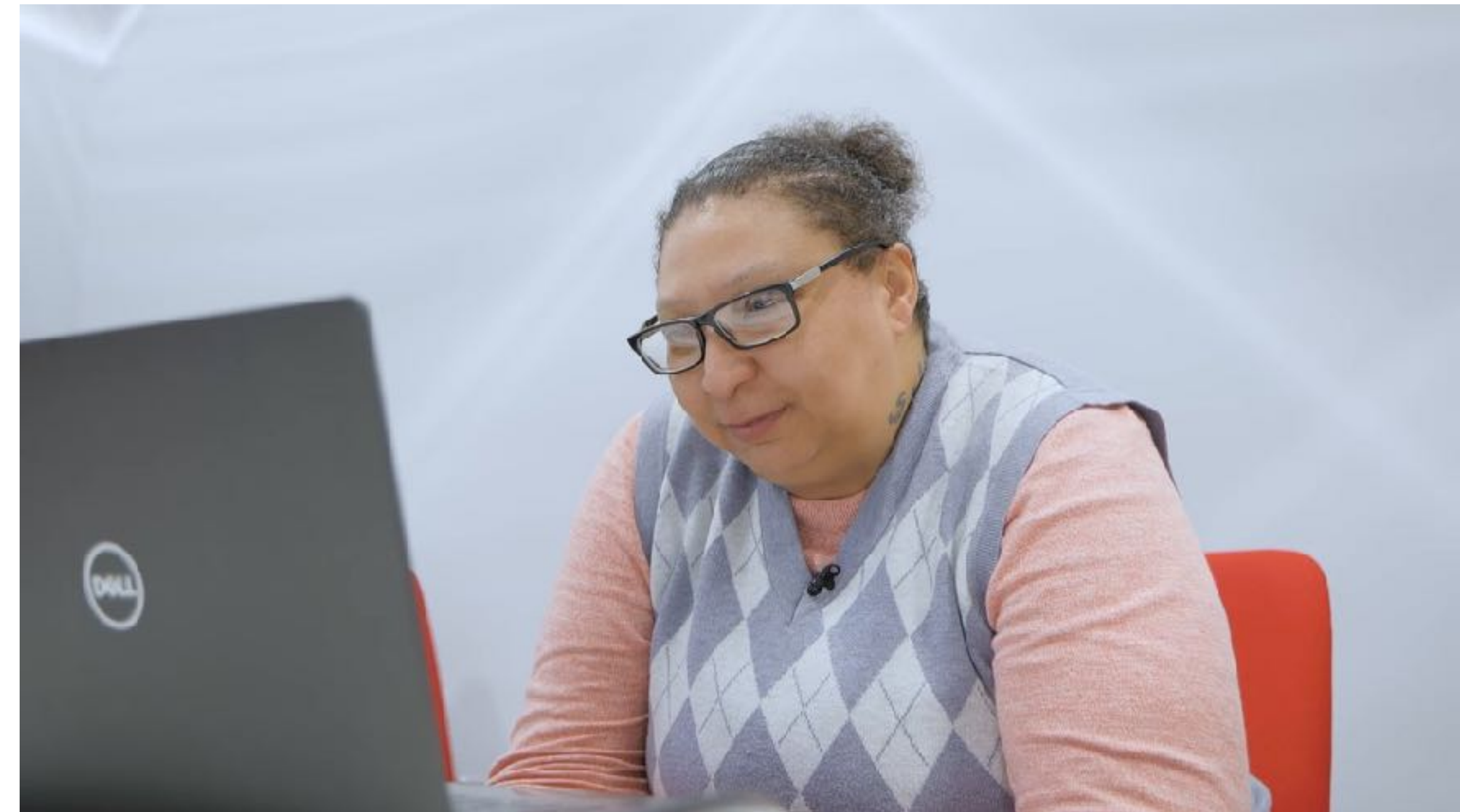
- Consent and permissions
 - How will the footage be used?
 - Making sure participants are comfortable
 - Allowing options for anonymity
 - Research ethics approvals



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Understanding the workflow

- Field capture
 - Capture interviews
 - Record supporting footage
 - Prioritise good audio
 - Capture enough material for editing



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Understanding the workflow

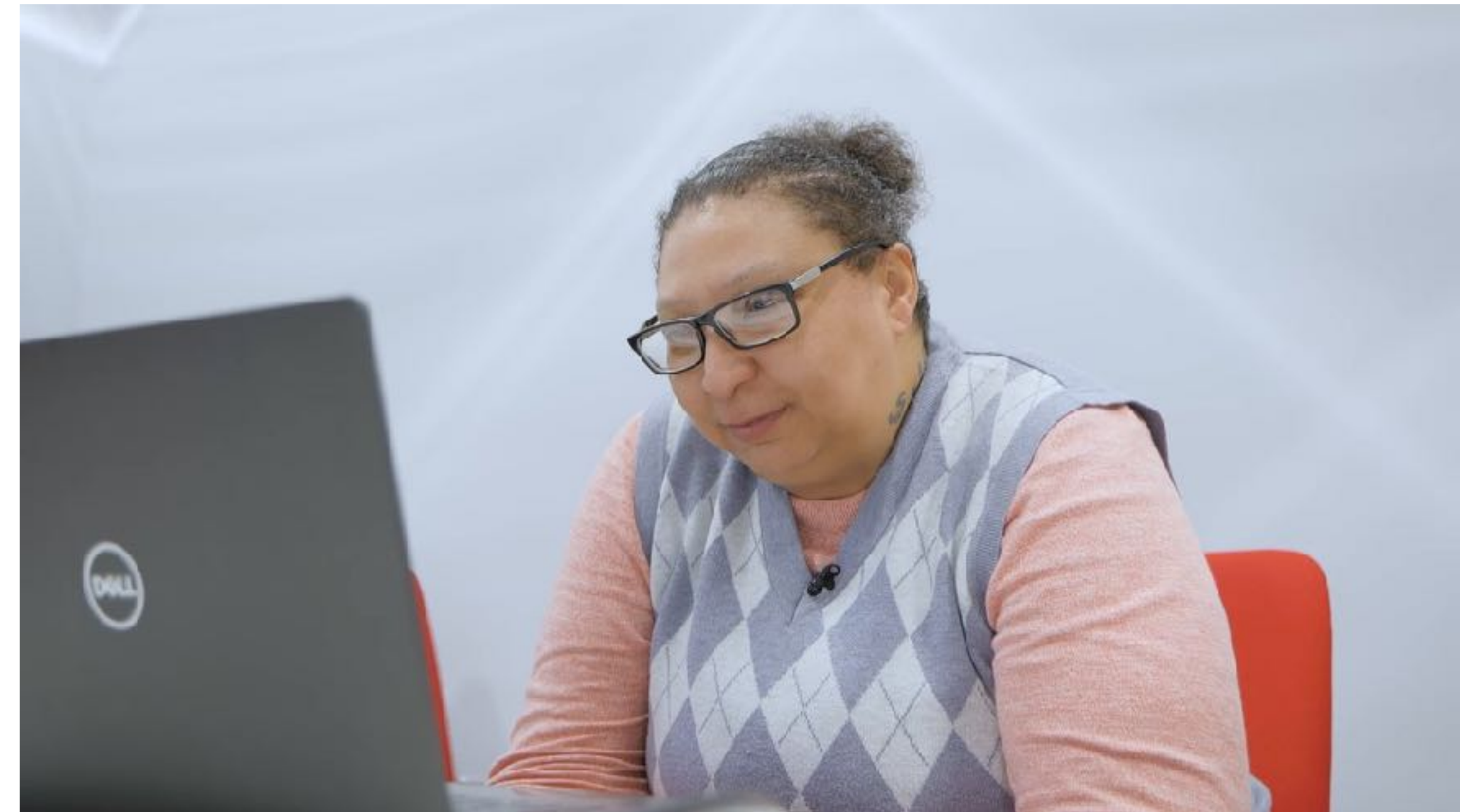
- File management
 - Back up files
 - Keep clips organised



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Understanding the workflow

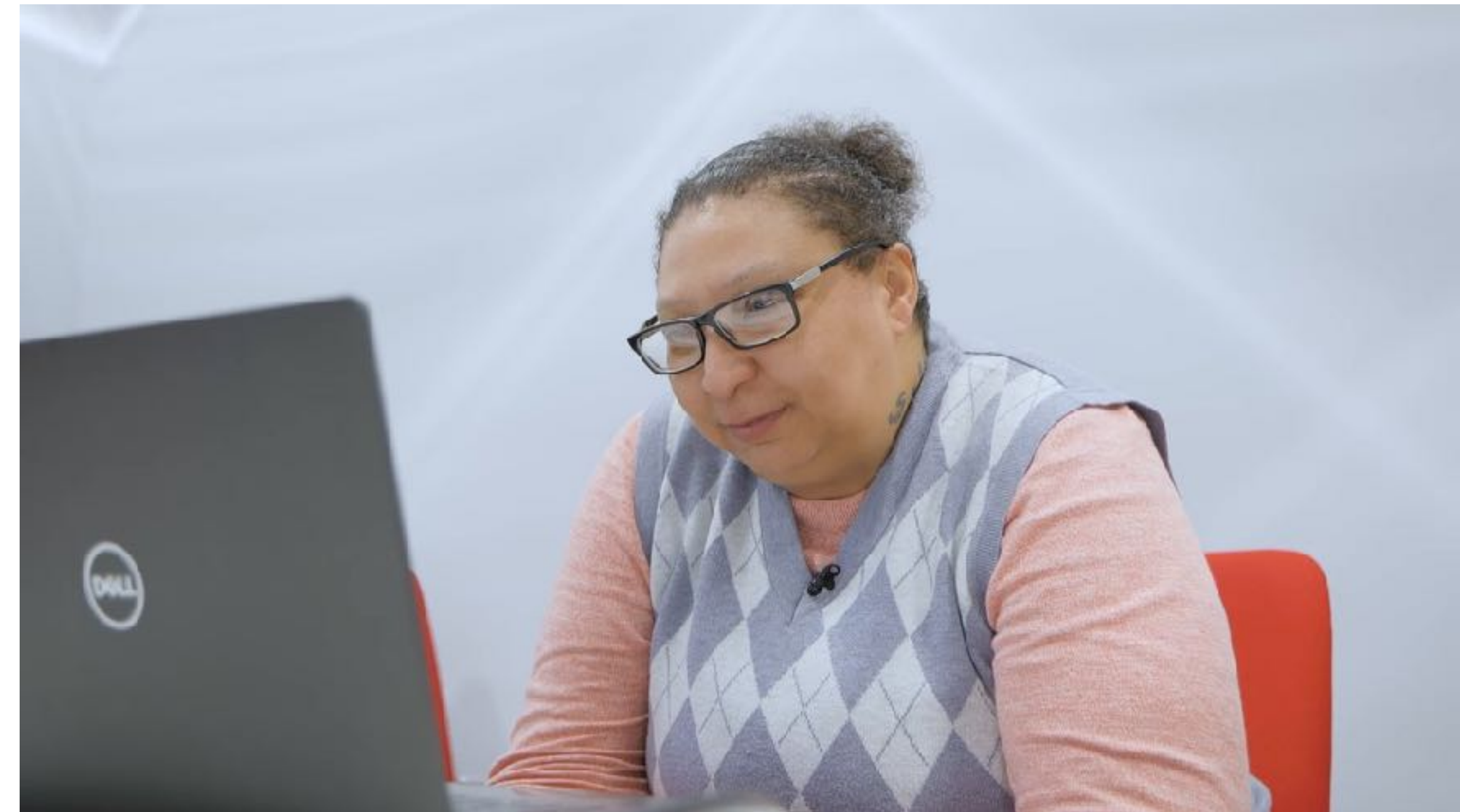
- Professional edit
 - Selecting clips
 - Constructing a narrative
 - Adding supporting footage
 - Adding titles or graphics



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Understanding the workflow

- Outputs
 - Case study video
 - Introductory video
 - Call for action
 - Social media videos



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Introduction to filming: Framing and stability

- Film horizontally
 - For laptops, projectors and websites
 - Best for documentary-style films
 - Still works for social media



Introduction to filming: Framing and stability

- Keep the camera at eye level
 - Conversational
 - Maintains perspective
 - Professional and comfortable
 - Connection with viewer
 - Seated or standing



Introduction to filming: Framing and stability

- Use the rule of thirds
 - Positioning the subject
 - Eye line
 - Balance
 - Negative space



Introduction to filming: Framing and stability

- Off-camera interviews
 - Subject to the side
 - Documentary style
- To-camera interviews
 - Subject centred
 - Speaking to the viewer
 - Solo filming



Introduction to filming: Framing and stability

- Natural light
 - Facing a light source
 - Avoid backlighting
 - Use shady areas



Introduction to filming: Framing and stability

- Check the background
 - Visual clutter
 - Bright lights or windows
 - Moving distractions



Introduction to filming: Framing and stability

- Keep the camera steady
 - Use a tripod
 - Use two hands
 - Elbows in
 - Avoid movement
 - Use something to steady yourself



Introduction to filming: Interviews

- Interviewee introduction
 - Name
 - Role
 - Connection



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Introduction to filming: Interviews

- Open questions
 - Can you describe...?
 - How did this project...?
 - Why is this research important?



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Introduction to filming: Interviews

- Ask for full-sentence answers
 - Use the question in the answer
 - Plain language
 - Um's and er's



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Introduction to filming: Interviews

- Avoid interrupting
 - Eye contact
 - Nodding and smiling



White Rose University Consortium - Equity in Leadership

Introduction to filming: Interviews

- Anonymity
 - Capture audio
 - Change the angle
 - Film hands



White Rose University Consortium - Equity in Leadership

Introduction to filming: Interviews

- Online interviews
 - Eye level
 - Good lighting
 - Quiet environment
 - Consider the background



White Rose University Consortium - Equity in Leadership

Introduction to filming: Sound is your priority

- Even more important than visuals



Introduction to filming: Sound is your priority

- Using a lapel microphone
 - Wireless microphone kits
 - Clipped to clothing



Introduction to filming: Sound is your priority

- Microphone placement
 - Mid-chest if possible
 - Windshield
 - Check clothing, jewellery, hair



Introduction to filming: Sound is your priority

- Unwanted noise
 - Wind
 - Traffic
 - Uninvolved people



Introduction to filming: Coverage

- Also known as 'B-roll' or 'cutaways'
 - Environment
 - People
 - Objects
 - Processes



Establishing shot



Detail shot



Medium shot

Introduction to filming: Coverage

- Establishing shots
 - Location
 - Building
 - Setting



Establishing shot



Detail shot



Medium shot

Introduction to filming: Coverage

- Medium shots
 - Groups
 - Walking
 - Demonstration



Establishing shot



Detail shot



Medium shot

Introduction to filming: Coverage

- Detail shots
 - Close-ups
 - Samples
 - Equipment
 - Notes



Establishing shot



Detail shot



Medium shot

Introduction to filming: Coverage

- Creating sequences
 - 1. Establishing shot
 - 2. Medium shot
 - 3. Detail shot



Establishing shot



Detail shot



Medium shot

Introduction to filming: Coverage

- Film for 10 seconds minimum
 - Hold the shot
 - Record before action
 - Record after action



Establishing shot



Detail shot



Medium shot

Introduction to filming: Coverage

- Little to no camera movement
 - Static shots
 - Avoid panning
 - Movement within the frame



Establishing shot



Detail shot



Medium shot

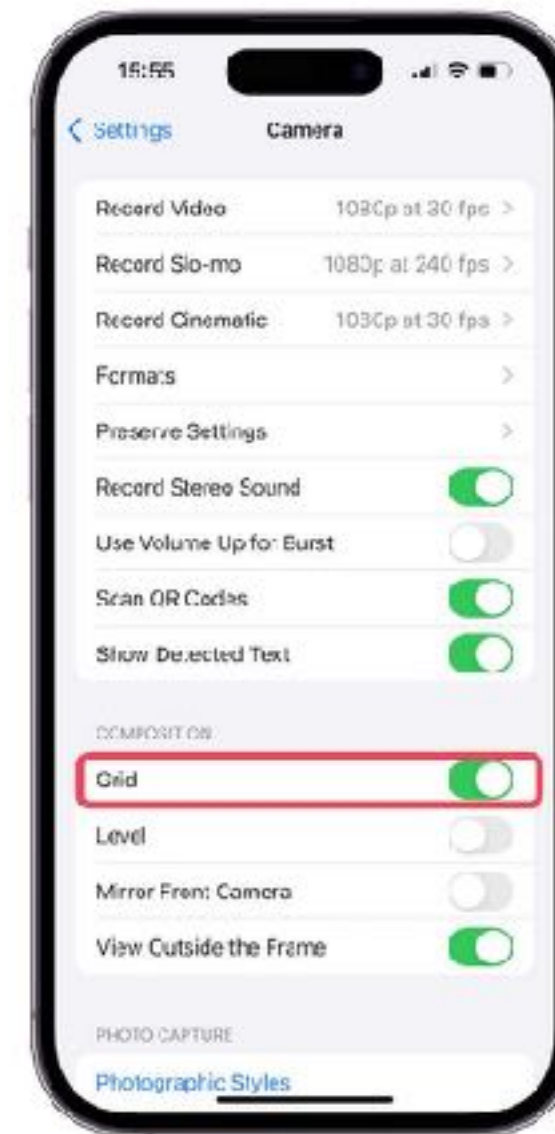
Example



[Click to watch](#)

Technical information

- Camera setup
 - Standard settings OK
 - Grid on
 - HDR off
 - Tap to focus
 - Clean your lens!



Turn on Grid view



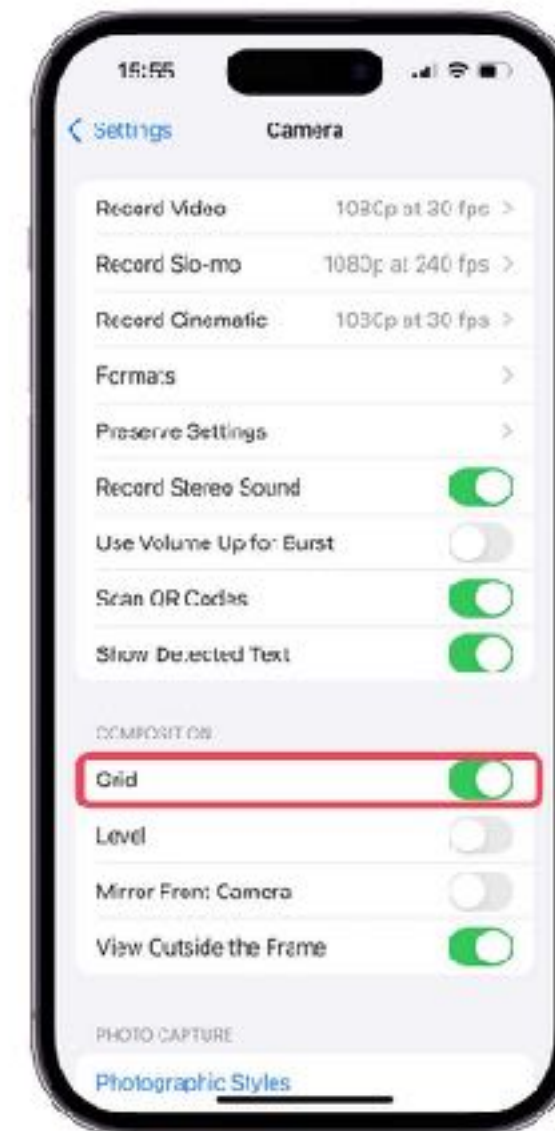
Correct exposure



Microphone setup

Technical information

- Exposure and lighting
 - Avoid strong lighting
 - Find areas of shade
 - Use natural light indoors



Turn on Grid view



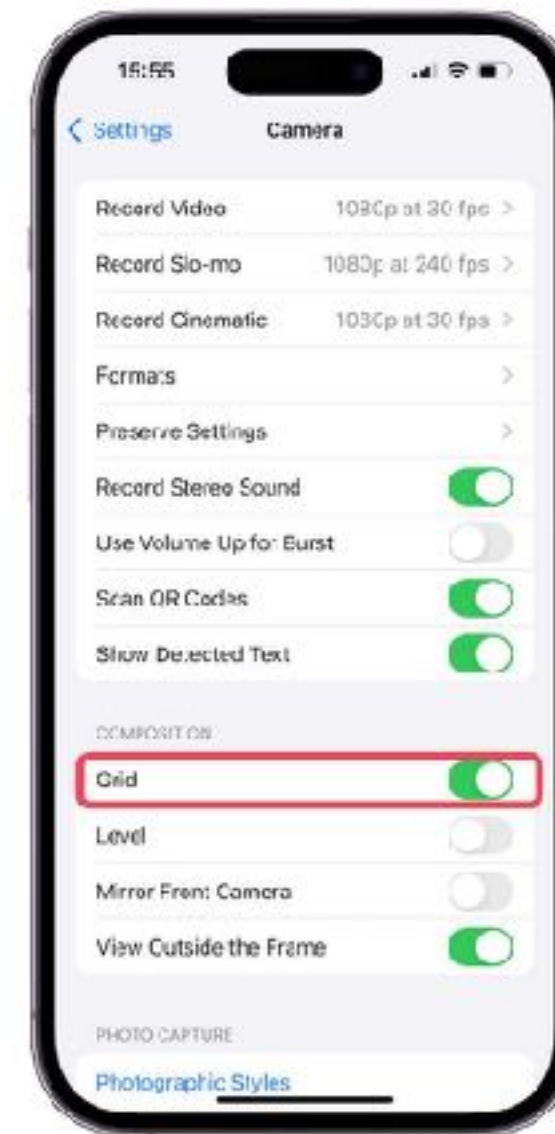
Correct exposure



Microphone setup

Technical information

- Microphone setup
 - Check connections
 - Check positioning
 - Check it's secure



Turn on Grid view



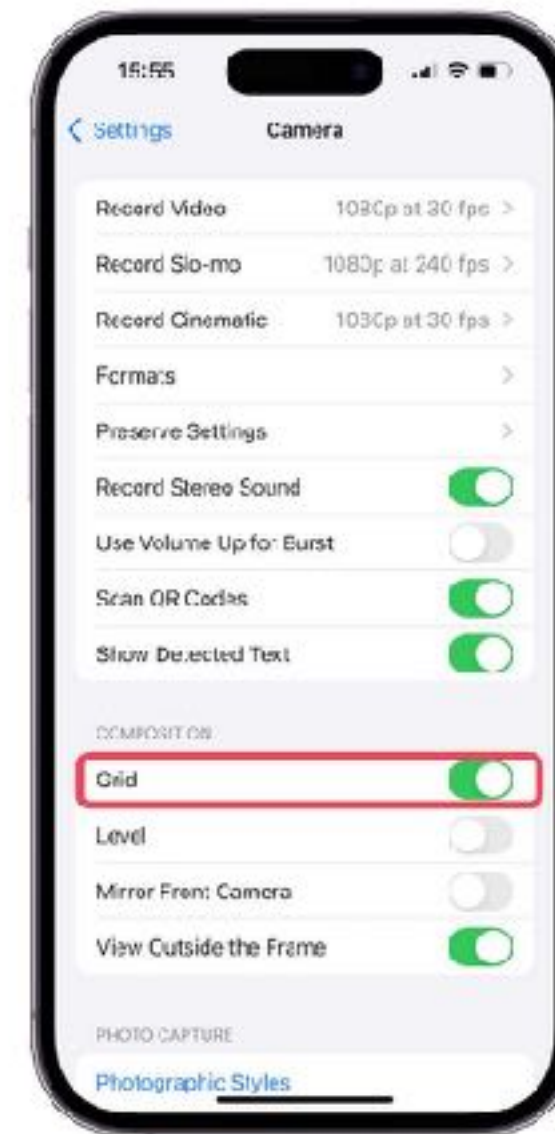
Correct exposure



Microphone setup

Technical information

- Airplane mode
- Interruptions
- Audio interference



Turn on Grid view



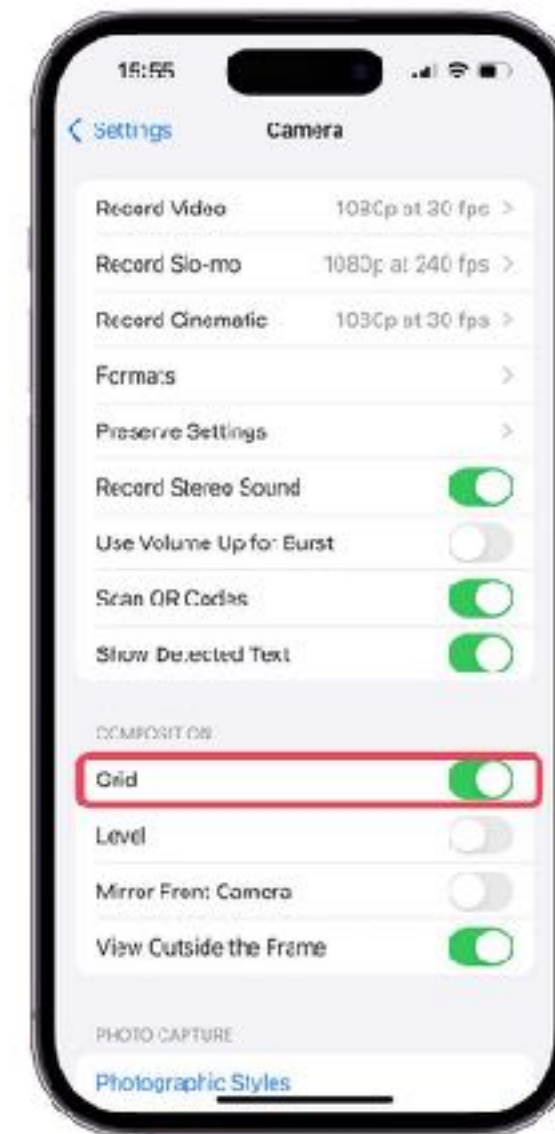
Correct exposure



Microphone setup

Technical information

- Film a test shot, check the audio
 - Framing
 - Focus
 - Audio



Turn on Grid view



Correct exposure



Microphone setup

Practical exercise

- Setup time
- Small groups
- Rotating roles
 - Interviewer / Director
 - Camera operator
 - Interviewee



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Practical exercise

- Interviewer / Director
 - Asking questions
 - Encouraging full-sentence answers
 - Avoiding interruptions
 - Maintaining eye contact
 - Coverage



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Practical exercise

- Camera operator
 - Framing
 - Focus
 - Audio
 - Distractions
 - Stability



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Practical exercise

- Interviewee
 - Clear, concise answers
 - Full sentences
 - Simple language
 - Short responses



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Practical exercise

- Short interview
- Supporting footage



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Practical exercise

e.g. How could your group's areas of research influence each other's work?

Reflections - group discussion

- What did you find challenging?
- What surprised you?
- Did filming change how you asked questions?
- Did being filmed change how you answered?
- Did you become more aware of the environment?

Feedback

- What is the key message?
- Where did B-roll/cutaways help?
- What was removed?
- Did we lack any coverage?
- What shot could have improved the sequence?
- How did the audio sound?
- Does this feel like an accurate portrayal of the subject?

Managing the edit

- Audience
 - Academia
 - Policymakers
 - Public



Editing software

Managing the edit

- Purpose
 - Raise profile
 - Public engagement
 - Demonstrate impact
 - Policy change



Editing software

Managing the edit

- Action
 - Find out more
 - Participation
 - Behaviour change
 - Share with others



Editing software

Managing the edit

- Accessibility
 - Clear language
 - Clear visuals
 - Subtitles
 - Audio Description
 - Graphic elements



Editing software

Next steps

- Would you feel confident filming something like this?
- Where would you need institutional support?
- How might you use video in the next six months?



Thank you!

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Feedback



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