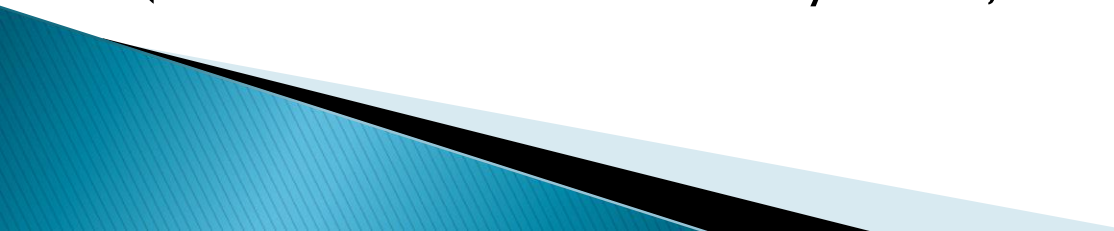


Research Ethics

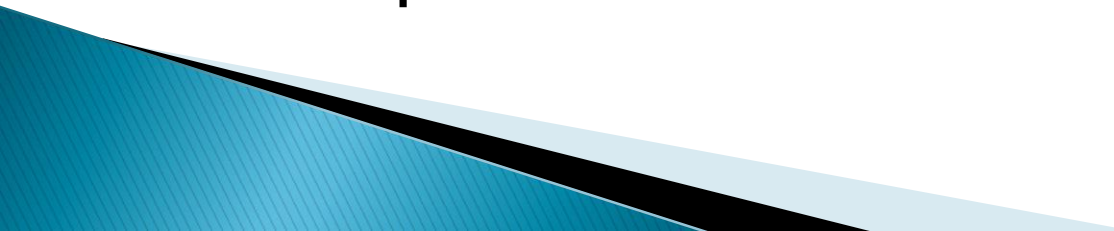
Definitions

- ▶ ‘ethic’ – a moral principle or set of moral values held by an individual or group.
- ▶ ‘ethics’ – the philosophical study of the moral value of human conduct and of the rules, principles that ought to govern it ... a code of behaviour considered correct ... the moral fitness of a decision, course of action.

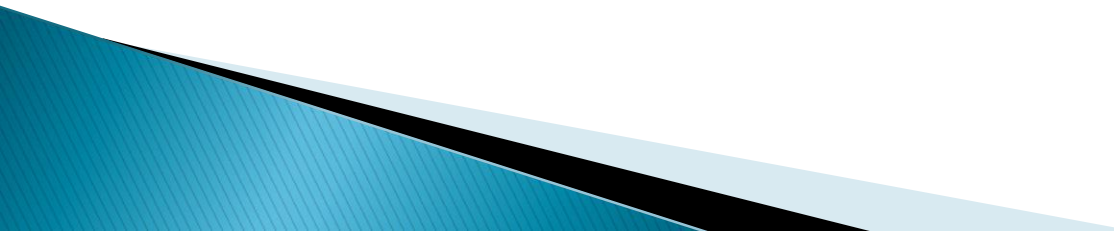
(Collins Concise Dictionary 1995, cited in Green, S. 2000)



Definitions

- ▶ ‘Research’ is defined as any form of disciplined inquiry that aims to contribute to a body of knowledge or theory.
 - ▶ ‘Research ethics’ refers to the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond – for example, the looking after of data and physical samples after the research has been published.
- 

Ethical Considerations in Research

- ▶ Ethics are the rules governing good or bad practice in research.
 - ▶ The researcher has responsibility to anyone participating in the study, not to invade their privacy unnecessarily or without their specific direction or permission.
- 

Ethical Considerations in Research

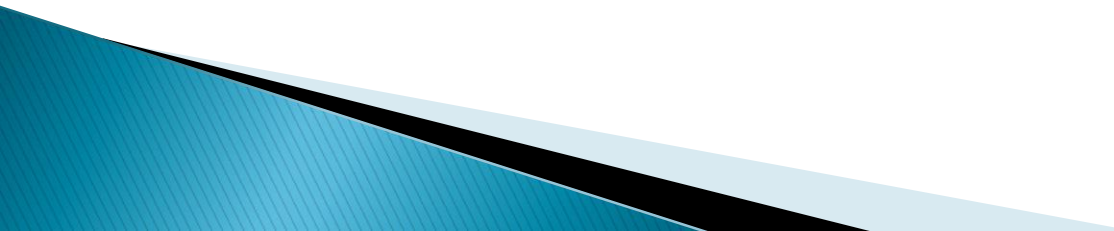
- ▶ Ethics is particularly important if the research is likely to involve sensitive aspects of participants' lives.
 - ▶ What may be acceptable to one person could be of a sensitive and difficult nature for another.
 - ▶ Research may be deemed unethical if there is a lack of consideration of people's feelings and the consequences for participants.
- 



RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethical Considerations in Research

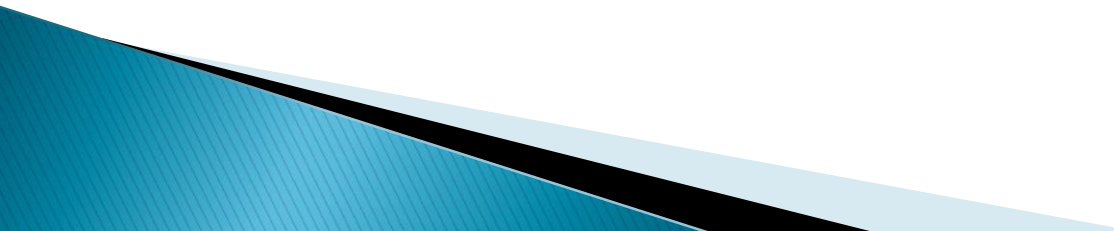
The following research would normally be considered as involving more than minimal risk:

- ▶ research involving vulnerable groups;
 - children and young people,
 - people with a learning disability or cognitive impairment
 - individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship
- 

Ethical Considerations in Research

- ▶ research involving sensitive topics:
 - participants' sexual behaviour,
 - participants' illegal or political behaviour,
 - participants' experience of violence,
 - participants' abuse or exploitation,
 - participants' mental health
 - participants' gender or ethnic status
- ▶ research involving groups where permission of a gatekeeper is normally required for initial access to members:
 - ethnic or cultural groups, native peoples or indigenous communities

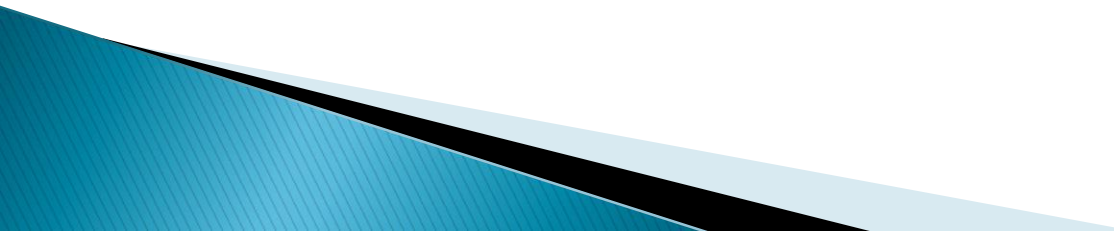
Six Key Principles of Ethical Research

- ▶ Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity and quality.
 - ▶ Research staff and subjects must be informed fully about:
 - ▶ the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research
 - ▶ what their participation in the research entails
 - ▶ what risks, if any, are involved.
- 

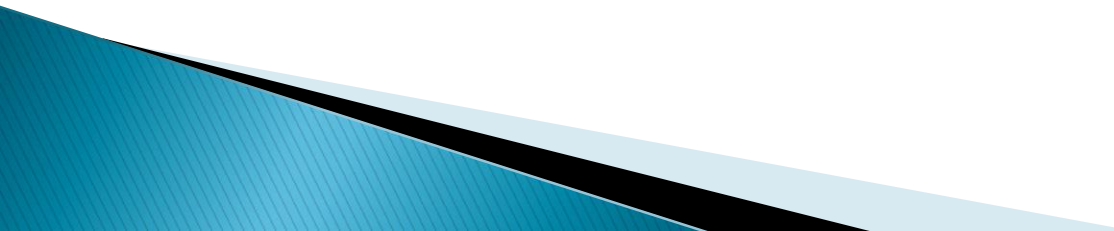
Key Principles of Ethical Research

- ▶ The confidentiality of information supplied by research subjects and the anonymity of respondents must be respected.
 - ▶ Research participants must participate in a voluntary way, free from any coercion.
 - ▶ Harm to research participants must be avoided.
 - ▶ The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit.
- 

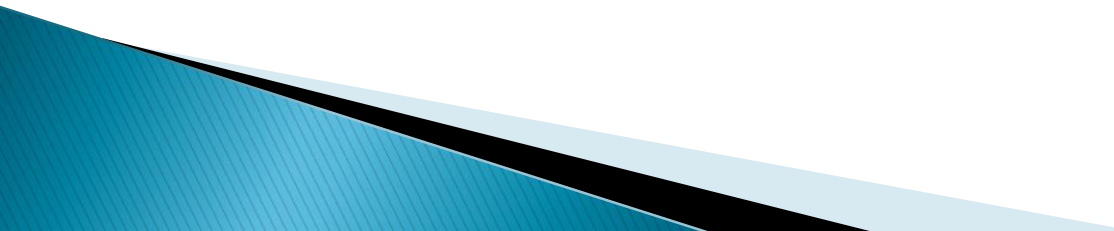
Examples of Unethical Research

- ▶ Research involving deception or which is conducted without participants' full and informed consent at the time the study is carried out.
 - ▶ Research involving access to records of personal or confidential information, including genetic or other biological information, concerning identifiable individuals.
 - ▶ Research which would induce psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation or cause more than minimal pain.
- 

Examples of Unethical Research

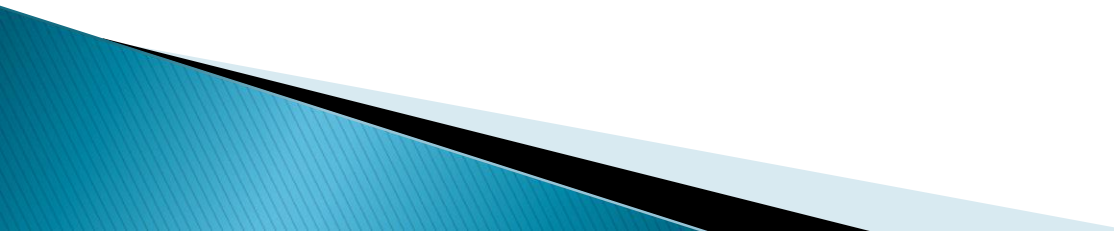
- ▶ Research involving intrusive interventions – for example, the administration of drugs or other substances, vigorous physical exercise, or techniques such as hypnotherapy.
 - ▶ Participants should not encounter such interventions, which may cause them to reveal information, which causes concern, in the course of their everyday life.
- 

Effects of Ignoring the Importance of Ethics

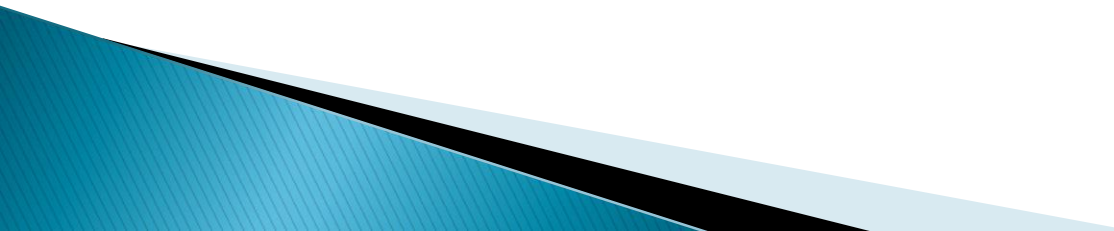
- ▶ Subjects which are not dealt with ethically or sensitively can cause distress to the participants.
 - ▶ This can affect the way in which the research project and researcher are viewed by others.
 - ▶ Any risks taken during the research project need to be balanced against the benefits the outcome of the research will bring.
- 

Good Practice

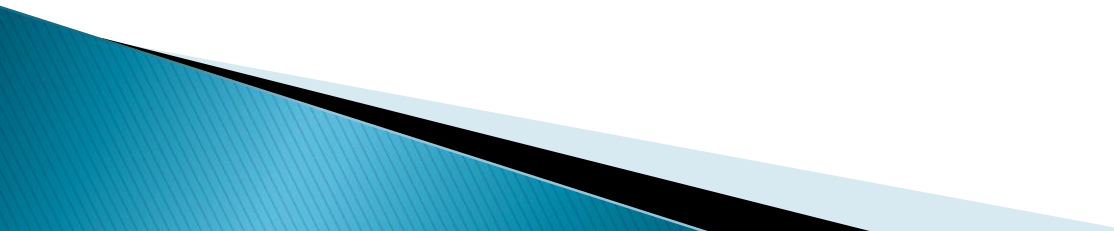
When carrying out research the researcher must:

- ▶ Obtain voluntary, informed consent of participants.
 - ▶ Ensure the research is good for society.
 - ▶ Avoid any physical or mental suffering.
 - ▶ Assess any potential risks to participants.
 - ▶ Allow participants to withdraw from the research at any stage of the process.
 - ▶ Ensure confidentiality of data, and anonymity relating to participants.
- 

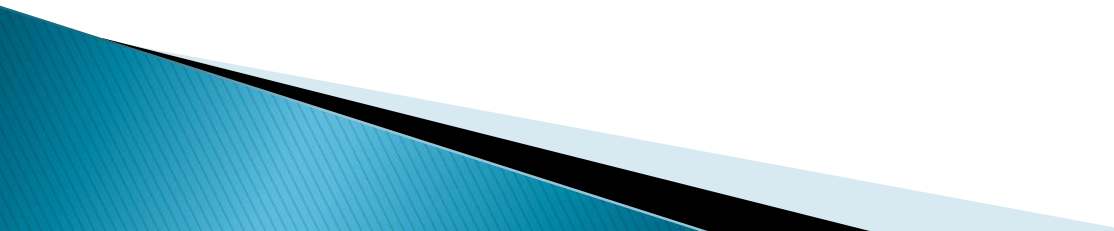
Responsibility For Ethical Research

- ▶ Overall responsibility for ensuring that research is subject to appropriate ethics review and approval lies with the University or research organisation, which employs the individual or individuals who conduct the research.
 - ▶ Some organisations will require approval of research by means of ethics protocol, which will be considered by an ethics committee.
- 

Involvement of Children in Research

- ▶ Seeing children as valuable participants in the research process has come about as a result of legislation and changing sociological perspectives.
 - ▶ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provided a framework for addressing rights relating to children's care, protection, adequate provision and rights to participation.
 - ▶ It must be recognised that children are vulnerable, and the child's right to participate must be balanced against the child's right to protection from harm.
- 

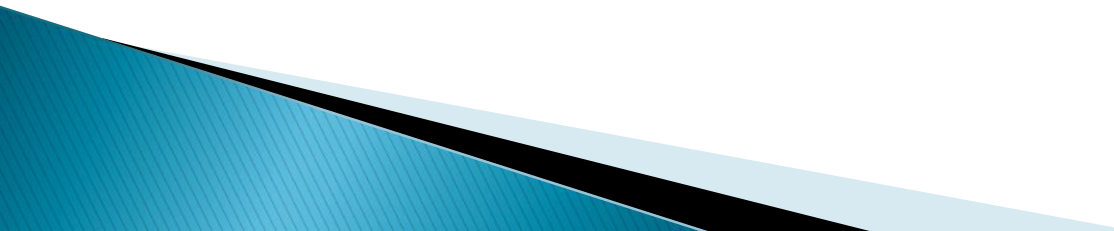
Involvement of Children in Research

- ▶ The Children Bill 2004 recognised the need to ensure that the views and perspectives of children and young people are heard on issues which affect them.
 - ▶ Children are increasingly regarded as socially competent.
 - ▶ It is important for researchers to include children's understandings and experiences in studies which affects children.
- 

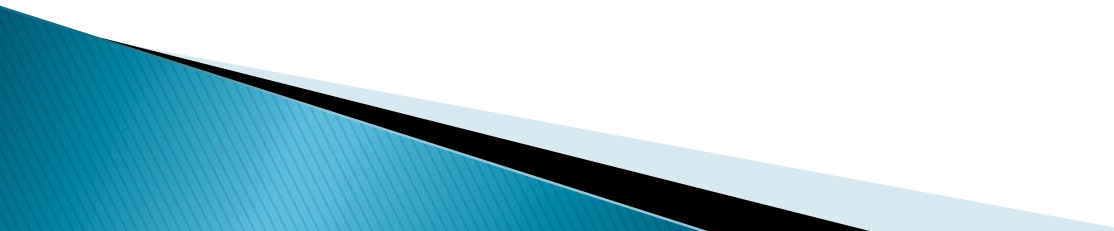
Involvement of Children in Research

- ▶ Researchers working with children are actively encouraged to listen to children and take their views seriously.
- ▶ Children are 'rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and most of all connected to adults and other children'

(Magaluzzi, 1993: cited in Roberts–Holmes 2005:55)



Involvement of Children in Research

- ▶ Ethics is central to research involving children.
 - ▶ Ethics is concerned with the attitude of the researcher.
 - ▶ If the researcher respects children's abilities, the researcher is likely to find appropriate methods to listen to children's voices.
- 

Further Reading

- ▶ Bell, J. and Waters, S. (2018) *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers*. 7th Edition. London: open University Press.
 - ▶ Flick, U. (2015) *Introducing Research Methodology*. London: Sage.
 - ▶ Roberts-Holmes, G. (2005) *Doing Your Early Years Research Project: A Step by Step Guide*, London: Paul Chapman.
- 