

## Topic #12

# ETHICS IN RESEARCH

### Ethics

- truth in reporting
  - accurate reporting of research
    - enabling reviewers to access data and materials as part of review process
    - post-publication sharing of data and materials
  - plagiarism
- treatment of research participants
- internal vs. external controls and checks

### Some Terms, Concepts, and Definitions

1. **Ethical**—A piece of behavioral research is ethical when the benefits and relevance of research balance costs in time and risks of harm to participants, when their interests and well-being are respected, and when they are properly informed about the nature of the research and the voluntary nature of their participation.
2. **Research Ethics** are guidelines to research decision-making.
3. **Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation**—an agreement with participants that clarifies the nature of the research and the responsibilities of each party.
  - should be documented in writing
  - ensures that participation is **VOLUNTARY**
  - elements of a consent form:
    - topic domain—what is the study about?
    - one of  $N$  participants
    - time
    - risks and costs
    - benefits
    - confidentiality or anonymity of responses or lack thereof
    - withdrawal and associated penalties, if any, for doing so
    - IRB review if required
    - researcher contact information

- IRB contact information
- signed copy, by both researcher and participant, for both participant and researcher

#### 4. Deception

- The first and primary concern should be the welfare of participants.
- Is the use of deception absolutely necessary to accomplish research objectives?
- Weigh potential costs against potential gains.
- When deception **is** used, one should not only debrief, but should desensitize as well.

5. **Debriefing**—debriefing participants about any deception that was used in the study. This also increases their understanding.

6. **Desensitizing**—eliminating any undesirable influences that the experiment may have had on participants—that is, debriefing participants about their behavior. One should not either debrief or desensitize when doing so will result in more harm than **NOT** doing so.

7. **Ethical Dilemma**—investigator's conflict in weighing potential cost to participant against potential gain to be accrued from the research project.

### ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGISTS AND CODE OF CONDUCT (2010)

#### General Principles

Principle A: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence  
 Principle B: Fidelity and Responsibility  
 Principle C: Integrity  
 Principle D: Justice  
 Principle E: Respect for People's Rights and Dignity

#### Ethical Standards

1. Resolving Ethical Issues  
 2. Competence  
 3. Human Relations  
 4. Privacy and Confidentiality  
 5. Advertising and Other Public Statements  
 6. Record Keeping and Fees  
 7. Educations and Training  
 8. Research and Publication  
 9. Assessment  
 10. Therapy

American Psychological Association. (2010). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. [www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx](http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx)

#### 8. Truth in Reporting

- plagiarism
- accurate reporting