

# Ethics in Psychology

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# The Need for Ethical Principles

- **Psychologists must ask and answer questions such as:**
  - Are we putting our participants at risk?
  - Is our experimental treatment harmful?
  - Is the information we will gather from our experiment worth the potential risk and harm to participants that is involved?

# The Need for Ethical Principles

- Four instances that created major concern regarding research ethics are cited in your text. These are:
  - The medical atrocities of World War II
  - The Tuskegee syphilis project
  - The Willowbrook hepatitis project
  - Stanley Milgram's obedience studies of the 1960's

# The Need for Ethical Principles

- Many Nazis who committed medical research atrocities during World War II were prosecuted at the Nuremberg War Tribunal. The [Nuremberg Code](#) stressed consideration of the following ethical principles:
  - Participants should consent to participate in research.
  - Participants should be fully informed of the nature of the research project.
  - Risks should be avoided whenever possible.
  - Participants should be protected against risks to the greatest extent possible.
  - Projects should be conducted by scientifically qualified personnel.
  - Participants have the right to discontinue participation at any time.

# APA Code of Ethics

- The APA has published a statement of ethical principles in 1953, 1958, 1963, 1968, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1990, 1992, and 2002.
- As of now, the 2002 ethical code is in effect (as of June 1, 2003). It can be found on WebCT.
- Conducting Ethical research means protecting participants from harm and abuse.

# APA Code of Ethics

## Five General Principles for Conduct

A. Benevolence and nonmaleficence

B. Fidelity and Responsibility

C. Integrity

D. Justice

E. Respect for People's Rights and Dignities

# APA Code of Ethics

## Ten Categories of 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. Education and training
8. Research and Publication
9. Assessment
10. Therapy

## 8.01 Institutional Approval

- Researchers must submit protocol to **Institutional Review Boards** which look carefully at the work, pointing out possible problems.
- IRB consists of members from many academic areas.



## 8.02 Informed Consent to Research

- Not only is **informed consent** required, but full disclosure as well.
- All facts that may potentially influence the participant's willingness to participate in the research must be told to them beforehand so that they can give INFORMED consent.
- When dealing with minors or others incapable of granting informed consent, then parents, guardians, etc must give informed consent.

## 8.03 Informed Consent for Recording Voices and Images in Research

- If participants are recorded and there is any chance they could be identified, then extra consent needs to be given.
- Additionally, if you wanted to use people's pictures as stimuli in an experiment, maybe an experiment taking the same people and getting pictures w/ and w/o glasses, you would need a special form of consent for the people in the pictures.

## 8.04 Client/Patient, Student, and Subordinate Research Participants

- Clients, students, and patients are in a vulnerable position. They may feel that volunteering for research is sort of “required”. That is, they may feel coerced.
- **Coercion** can occur both at the initial point of volunteering and at a later point in the experiment when the participant wishes to withdraw but doesn't.
- In Psych 1301 classes, there must always be alternate ways, other than participation in research, for students to achieve extra credit.

## 8.05 Dispensing with Informed Consent for Research

- In certain cases, informed consent is not needed.
- Where research would not be assumed to create harm:
  - Classroom management methods
  - Anonymous questionnaires, naturalistic observation, archival research
  - Job place management methods
- “Where otherwise permitted by law”

## 8.06 Offering Inducements for Research Participation

- Financial inducements to participation can act to coerce people:
  - “I really need the money, but I’ll only get it if I participate.”
- Even worse than coercion, financial inducements can easily create exploitation of certain classes of people (i.e. destitute).
  - Who do you think tests out these fancy new drugs before the FDA approves them? Who reaps the benefits?

## 8.07 Deception in Research

- If **deception** is to be used, the researcher must determine if a nondeceptive procedure could be used which would obtain the same results.
  - Or even better, is this procedure even justified.
  - Providing a *complete* explanation or description of the project may influence the participants' responses.
  - It is arguable that deception may be justified in some cases if our results are to be unbiased or uncontaminated by knowledge of the experiment and the expectancies that such knowledge may bring.
- If deception is used, debriefing must be given **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. Deception often has the consequences of creating unwanted psychological distress.

## 8.08 Debriefing

- **Debriefing** is used to remove misconception that deception may have created, or any misconceptions that may have arisen.
- Misconceptions can cause psychological harm.
- If psychologists become aware that harm has occurred, then they must do everything they can to alleviate that harm.
- Benevolence and nonmaleficence

## 8.08 Debriefing

- Aronson and Carlsmith (1968) proposed the following guidelines for effective debriefing:
  - The researcher's integrity as a scientist must be conveyed to the participants.
  - If deception was used, the researcher should reassure the participants that it was not wrong or a reflection on their integrity or intelligence to feel that they have been tricked or fooled.
  - The debriefing session should progress slowly. Do not rush.
  - Researchers should make every effort to return participants to the same state they were in at the beginning of the project.
  - The researcher should repeat all guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity that were made at the beginning of the project.
  - For maximum effectiveness, the researcher should conduct the debriefing session immediately following the experimental session.



## 8.09 Humane Care and Use of Animals in Research

- Here is a brief summary of the APA (1985) guidelines for the use of animals:
  - I. **Justification of Research.** the research should have a clear scientific purpose.
  - II. **Personnel.** Only trained personnel who are familiar with the animal-care guidelines should be involved with the research. All procedures must conform to appropriate federal guidelines.
  - III. **Care and Housing of Animals.** Animal housing areas must comply with current regulations.
  - IV. **Acquisition of Animals.** If animals are not bred in the laboratory, they must be acquired in a lawful, humane manner.
  - V. **Experimental Procedures.** Humane consideration for the well-being of the animal should be incorporated into the design and conduct of all procedures involving animals, while keeping in mind the primary goal of experimental procedures – the acquisition of sound, replicable data.
  - VI. **Field Research.** Field research must be approved by the appropriate review board. Investigators should take special precautions to disturb their research population(s) and the environment as little as possible.
  - VII. **Educational Use of Animals.** The educational use of animals also must be approved by the appropriate review board. Instruction in the ethics of animal research is encouraged.

# Animal Experimentation Arguments Against

- Animals feel pain and suffering in the same way as humans.
- The destruction of any living thing is dehumanizing to the human scientist.
- Scientific progress at the expense of animals is simply a form of **speciesism** (the belief that if humans are benefited, then it is justified to harm an animal).

# Animal Experimentation

## Arguments For

1. **Physiological experiments** that would be unethical to do with humans might be possible with animals.
2. Animals are **convenient** participants.
3. The history and background of animals can be **controlled** (beyond experimental control). The internal validity of animal experiments is MUCH better.
4. Some animal research is done solely to benefit other animals.

## 8.10 Reporting Research Results

- Researchers do not fabricate data.
  - This includes both totally false and altered data.
- If a researcher discovers errors in their data after publication, they will attempt to correct this error.

## 8.10 Reporting Research Results

### Data Fraud

- Scientists lives and livelihoods often hinge on the success or nonsuccess of their experiments.
- Scientists have been known to fudge or tweak data to make the data more favorable for their hypotheses.
- Science is a self-correcting thing.
  - People try replicating successful findings.
  - When several replications fail, eventually the original data will be questioned.

## 8.11 Plagiarism

- Psychologists do not present others data or writing as their own.

# Responsible Dissemination

- Researchers have a responsibility to share study findings with others, regardless of whether
  - Findings are positive or negative
  - Findings support or fail to support a study treatment or assessment
- A study should remain un-disseminated if
  - It demonstrates poor science
  - It is associated with misconduct

# Responsible Dissemination (continued)

- Form and place of dissemination (e.g., journal, conference) should be based on target audience.



# Responsible Dissemination (continued)

- A funder should not:
  - Control when, where, or if findings should be disseminated
  - Edit or otherwise control content or form of articles or presentations
  - Remove or reinterpret data it finds objectionable
- Propriety information should be determined by review of an impartial body, prior to agreeing to research, and a set time agreed if a period of non-disclosure is needed

# Inflated Publications

- Publishing helps bring prestige and fame to a researcher
- It is tempting to inflate publications by
  - Fragmented Publications
  - Redundant Publications

# Fragmented Publications

- *Fragmented Publications* are those in which data are separated to produce multiple publications at the cost of coherent, connected, and comprehensive analyses
- Derisively called *delicatessen* or *salami* publications because data are *sliced thinly*

# Fragmented Publications (continued)

- Inflate a researcher's curriculum vita, without substance
- Isolate findings from one another
- Impair holistic understanding of impact study
- Inappropriately inflate a study's impact by overemphasizing a single sample's impact.
  - Readers incorrectly assume results were produced by multiple studies with multiple samples.

# Redundant Publications

- Redundant Publications involve dissemination of a single set of data and findings in more than one article
- A tempting way to ensure that multiple readerships are exposed to the work.

# Redundant Publications (continued)

- Are irresponsible because they
  - Require redundant review toward dissemination:
    - Abuse collegial trust in the authors' assurance
    - Fraudulently uses resources of journal or conference
  - Inflate a study's impact by inaccurately implying that there were multiple studies with multiple samples (same as fragmented publications)
  - Are likely to break copyright rules by using figures, tables, and narrative already copyrighted within another article.

# Permitted Redundancies

- The same data and findings may be reported at several oral venues (e.g., conferences) if:
  - Conference planners are fully informed of prior presentations
  - Same title is used across forums
- The same data and findings may be reported in both oral and written venues if:
  - Original oral dissemination is reported in *Author's Notes* portion of the article

# Permitted Redundancies

- The same data and findings may be reported in redundant journals if
  - The journals have separate readerships. Example: A researcher can publish a translated work in a separate journal.
  - Both sets of editors and publishers are informed and agree to the redundant publication
  - There is an *original* journal. The researcher should not submit one work for simultaneous review by more than one journal.

(Magnus & Kalichman, 2002)



# Plagiarism

- Defined as using another source's ideas, words, drawings, data, figures, findings, conclusions or other work, without reporting or by misreporting the original source.
- Derived from the Latin *plagium* meaning *kidnapping*  
(American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 3rd ed., 1992)

# Plagiarism (continued)

- Plagiarism is considered serious scientific misconduct
- In federal rules, plagiarism is one of three personal behaviors that constitute research misconduct. The other two are intentional fabrication or falsification of data and sources. Endangering participants and inappropriate handling of funds are considered institutional, not individual researcher, issues.

(Office of Science and Technology Policy, n.d.)

## Plagiarism is Plagiarism, Irrespective of:

- **Intent:** Innocent but sloppy scholarship is plagiarism
- **Amount:** A single phrase or sentence is plagiarism
- **Source:** Work taken from verbal or written works; whether published or unpublished is plagiarism
- **Copyright:** Work taken from or published in non-copyrighted pieces is plagiarism

# Four Types of Plagiarism

- **Direct:** Verbatim use of material without quotation or citation
- **Insufficient Acknowledgement:** Citation of some materials and not others; confusing source of individual ideas
- **Mosaic:** Ideas and words pieced together from multiple sources without separate citations.
- **Thesaurus** (which AMA calls *Paraphrase*): Changing words while retaining original flow and meaning. See Table 1 in reading or next slide.

(American Medical Association, 1998)

Table 1 Comparison of two ways to paraphrase

Original Material	Unacceptable Paraphrasing	Acceptable Paraphrasing
<p>“The essence of the scientific method involves observations that can be repeated and verified by others. Hence, psychologists do not make up data or modify their results to support a hypothesis . . . Errors of omission also are prohibited. Psychologists do not omit troublesome observations from their reports so as to present a more convincing story.</p> <p>“Careful preparation of manuscripts for publication is essential, but errors can still occur. It is the author’s responsibility to make such errors public if they are discovered after publication . . . The first step is to inform the editor and the publisher so that a correction notice can be published . . . The goal of such a correction is to correct the knowledge base so that the error is brought to the attention of future users of the information. Corrections published in APA journals are connected with the original article in the PsycARTICLES database so that the correction will be retrieved whenever the original article is retrieved.” (APA, 2001, pp. 348–349)</p>	<p>The core of the scientific approach involves experiences that can be replicated and tested by others (APA, 2001). Therefore, psychologists do not fabricate data or change their results to support a theory. They are also prohibited from omitting information. Psychologists do not leave out problematic observations from their work even if doing so makes a more convincing argument.</p> <p>Meticulous preparation of manuscripts for publication is crucial, but mistakes can still happen (APA, 2001). The author must make such errors public if the errors are discovered after the article has been published. To do this, the author must first inform the editor and the publisher so that a correction notice, or <i>erratum</i>, can be published. The objective of such an erratum is to rectify the knowledge base so that the error is caught by future users of the information. Corrections published in journals that use APA style are linked with the original work in the PsycARTICLES computer database so that the correction will be included whenever the original article is accessed.</p>	<p>As stated in the fifth edition of the <i>Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association</i>, the ethical principles of scientific publication are designed to ensure the integrity of scientific knowledge and to protect the intellectual property rights of others. As the <i>Publication Manual</i> explains, authors are expected to correct the record if they discover errors in their publications; they are also expected to give credit to others for their prior work when it is quoted or paraphrased.*</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>According to the <i>Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association</i> (APA, 2001), publishing fabricated data or falsified results undermines the credibility of scientific research. Such active misrepresentation is considered a sin of commission. Equally reprehensible is its companion, the sin of omission, in which inconvenient or contradictory data are omitted so that a researcher’s hypotheses appear to be better supported.</p> <p>These are different from the honest errors that can occur during publication. Both falsified results and intentionally omitted data are intended to mislead, whereas errors are inadvertent and void of such intent. The <i>APA Publication Manual</i> (2001) demands that errors caught after publication be acknowledged and corrected in the same forums that contain the original work. This permits people using those forums weeks, months, or years later to avoid perpetuating the original mistake. The author informs the editor and publisher that he or she has discovered an error, and a correction of the error (i.e., an erratum) is published in the next available journal and linked to the original work in all databases containing the original (APA, 2001). Errors that are caught before publication should be corrected, averting any need for such actions.</p>
<p><i>Note:</i> From <i>Responsible Conduct of Research, Part I</i> [Curriculum], by E. B. Stern (2000), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. Adapted with permission.</p> <p>*This paragraph is a verbatim example of a paraphrase from the <i>APA Publication Manual</i> (2001). It is meant to demonstrate a paraphrase. Therefore, although it is verbatim, it has not been placed in quotation marks.</p>		

# An Ethical Writer

- Clearly identifies another source's ideas and words
- Accurately directs a reader to all original sources

# To Prevent Plagiarism

- Take careful notes:
  - Copy all bibliographic information on notes
  - Use quotation marks when recording verbatim statements.
- Use more than one source of information
- Write a first draft without notes

# To Prevent Plagiarism (continued)

- Trust your own work. Believe that your words have worth
- Know the style manual used by your target journal or conference, and apply rules as you write
- Use reference software even in early drafts

*Indiana University (2004),*

*Online Writing Lab, Purdue University (2004),*

*Procter (2005)*

*Trivedi and Williams (2003)*



Even ethical research can be  
irresponsibly disseminated...

# Issues in Case Studies

- Definition = “case material obtained while working with an individual or organization to illustrate a problem, to indicate a means for solving a problem, or to shed light on needed research or theoretical matters.”

(American Psychological Association , 2001, p 8-9)

- Problematic balance between confidentiality and dissemination

# Protecting Confidentiality of Case Participants

- American Psychological Association (2001) requires that case participant be unidentifiable, or that participant give explicit permission to be described in identifiable manner
- To make case participant unidentifiable, may
  - Strip identifiers and describe only limited characteristics
  - Conceal or confuse identity by adding untrue details as long as researcher informs reader of this fact

(American Psychological Association, 2001)

# Protecting Confidentiality of Case Participants (continued)

- American Medical Association (1998) requires that case participant give explicit permission for case to be disseminated.
  - To make case participant unidentifiable, may
    - Strip identifiers and describe only limited characteristics
    - Not allowed to add untrue details. AMA considers this falsifying data
- (American Medical Association, 1998)

# Responsible Display of Quantitative Data

- Use figures and tables to clarify data and findings
- Avoid misleading audience or reader.
  - Use full axes for figures. Abbreviated axes falsely magnify differences.
- Provide information that clarifies mean differences, such as standard deviation, confidence interval, effect size.

## 8.12 Publication Credit

- Psychologists put their name only on research to which they have actually contributed.
- First authorship should always go to that person that made the largest contribution to the work.

## 8.13 Duplicate Publication of Data

- Psychologists do not deceptively publish the same data twice.
- It is possible to publish the same data twice, as long as proper acknowledgement is given.

## 8.14 Sharing Research Data for Verification

- Psychologists do not withhold data.
- Published data becomes public property.
- If another researcher requests your data, it is common courtesy to share it.



## 8.15 Reviewers

- Reviewers respect the privacy of authors.
- Likewise, reviewers do NOT steal things that have been submitted to them for review.

# Review of Important Ethical Points

- Informed consent and debriefing
- Freedom to withdraw
- Protection from harm and debriefing
- Removing harmful consequences
- Confidentiality

# The Experimenter's Responsibility

- The experimenter is the single individual who is ultimately accountable for the ethical conduct of the research project.
  - The researcher carefully weighs the *benefits* and *costs* of a project and then decides whether to conduct it.

# The Participant's Responsibility

- Korn (1988) indicated the research participant has the following responsibilities:
  - Be on time for the research appointment.
  - Participants have the responsibility to listen carefully to the experimenter and ask questions in order to understand the research.
  - Participants should take the research seriously and cooperate with the experimenter.
  - When the study has been completed, participants share the responsibility for understanding what happened.
  - Participants have the responsibility for honoring the researcher's request that they not discuss the study with anyone else who might be a participant.