

Key Ethical Considerations for Research with Young People



CRIS
Centre for Resilient
and Inclusive Societies



**YOUNG &
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Harms and Benefits

- Research should bring about good and do no harm
- Ethical research requires reflecting on risk and making decisions about minimising risks and maximising benefits for participants and others – this is not straightforward
- Harm can occur whether the research is qualitative or quantitative
- Contextual and personal factors influence how harms and benefits are felt
- Researchers need to be prepared to respond to any risks

- Does the research with children and young people actually need to be done? Why?
- Do the researchers have the capacity, skills, knowledge and cultural awareness?
- What are the potential risks of harm? (E.g. physical, psychological, burdens, disappointment)
- What harms may occur after participation?
- What plans can be put in place to reduce risk? Are some participants at higher risk?
- What are the potential benefits? (E.g. learning the findings of the study, having their views heard, improving services they access)

Accessibility and Inclusion

- Research should be equitable and non-discriminatory (rights-informed)
- Research should be inclusive of all young people, without discriminating on the basis of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, language, geographic location, etc.
- Specific measures, e.g. choosing methods that enable inclusiveness and ease of access, need to be put in place to ensure meaningful participation, particularly for disadvantaged groups

- What might exclude certain participants from the research? (Methods, locations, topics, recruitment criteria, accessibility)
- What methods and approaches can ensure that all young people can participate?

Informed Consent

- Obtaining consent demonstrates respect for the participant's dignity – their capability and right to make decision about matters that affect them
- Gaining informed consent shows honesty – that the researcher has not deceived the participant about the study
- Consent involved an explicit act (e.g. a written or verbal agreement), can only be given if participants understand the research, must be voluntary without coercion, and must be re-negotiable so that they can withdraw.
- Parental consent is also required for under 18s

- Whose consent is needed?
- How does the local context, age of participants, capacity and understandings determine how consent should be obtained?
- How will information about the research be explained at the participants level of comprehension?
- How does power impact consent?
- What can be put in place to prevent coercion?
- How will the competence of participants to consent be assessed?

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Researchers must respect participant's privacy and ensure their information remains confidential
- Data must be securely stored, protected, and disposed of
- The location and methods used in data collection impact on privacy and confidentiality
- Personal information is that which could lead to the identification of a participant (name, age, address, gender, qualifications, ethnicity)
- Privacy includes ensuring participants are anonymous
- There are circumstances when confidentiality needs to be breached (e.g. child abuse concerns)

- How can participant's privacy and confidentiality be respected?
- How can privacy be maintained in the research setting?
- How will participants be kept anonymous?
- What plans are in place for the safe keeping of data?

Payment and Compensation

- Participants should be appropriately reimbursed for any expenses, compensated for efforts, time or lost income, and acknowledged for their contribution
- Payment should be avoided if it pressures, coerces, bribes or causes disadvantage
- Financial dealings can change relationships and impact power dynamics
- Careful consideration of the local social and cultural context in determining payment/compensation is crucial
- In some contexts, forms of compensation other than monetary may be more appropriate

- How will participants be recognised?
- How will they be supported, financially or otherwise?
- What ethical issues may arise because of this?