



Ethics

# Why are ethics issues important?

## Examples:

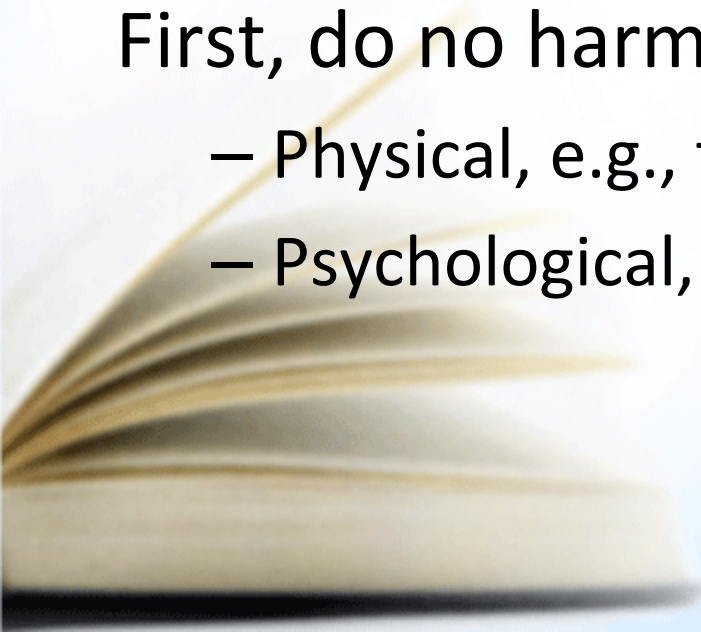
- Zimbardo's prison study
- Milgram's shock experiment
- Johnson's "Monster" experiment
- Marc Hauser (2010)
- Diederik Stapel (2011)



**\*\*Explicit guidelines for ethical treatment of human beings and nonhumans only emerged in 1971 via APA\*\* (Saville, 2008)**

**First, do no harm, physical or psychological.**

- Physical, e.g., food, drink, sleep, etc.
- Psychological, e.g., sad thoughts, anger, anxiety



APA's general principles are important to keep in mind for all research:

- \*Beneficence and nonmaleficence

- \*Fidelity and responsibility

- \*Integrity

- \*Justice

- \*Respect for individuals' rights and dignity



# Other more specific issues to consider

- \*Inducement (coercion?) vs. reward
- \*Deception
- \*Carelessness
- \*Consideration of treatments for all
- \*"Power" issues



A consent form should ensure as much transparency and care in the process as possible.

The consent form should include the following:

- \*Name/contact information
  - \*General information about the study
  - \*What will be required of the participant
  - \*Acknowledgement of any “risks”
  - \*Length of the study
  - \*Guarantee of secure data and confidentiality of data
  - \*Explanation of voluntary participation
  - \*Right to withdraw
- \*\*\*All should be in language that is clear to the participant\*\*\***



Debriefing upholds basic principles of psychological science and concern for participant, including:

- \*Thank you/appreciation

- \*Clarified aim of the study, including basic hypothesis/hypotheses

- \*Contact details again

- \*Sources of further information, both academic and psychological support if needed

# What is the issue in the following?

- What are the concerns?
- Is this worth doing at all?
- What steps would you take to keep it ethical?  
What changes should be made? Should this be done?



# Cases (from Wood & Percy, 2009)

1. For a study on safe sex, Sam invites participants to sign up on a sheet on the wall and include email addresses.
2. Tom interviews exchange students on adaptations to university and homesickness.
3. Cathy goes online to a chat room to recruit parents of terminally ill children to talk about the experience of coping and loss.

# Cases (from Wood & Percy, 2009)

4. Mary seeks to recruit students who are depressed to talk about their difficulties with studies. She asks students to contact her via email to participate.
5. Tina believes that students are more “honest” once they have had a few drinks. She is studying ideas about gender roles and seeks consent from students at the same time of her interviews, i.e., during a party held at Shaw College featuring alcoholic drinks.

# More cases

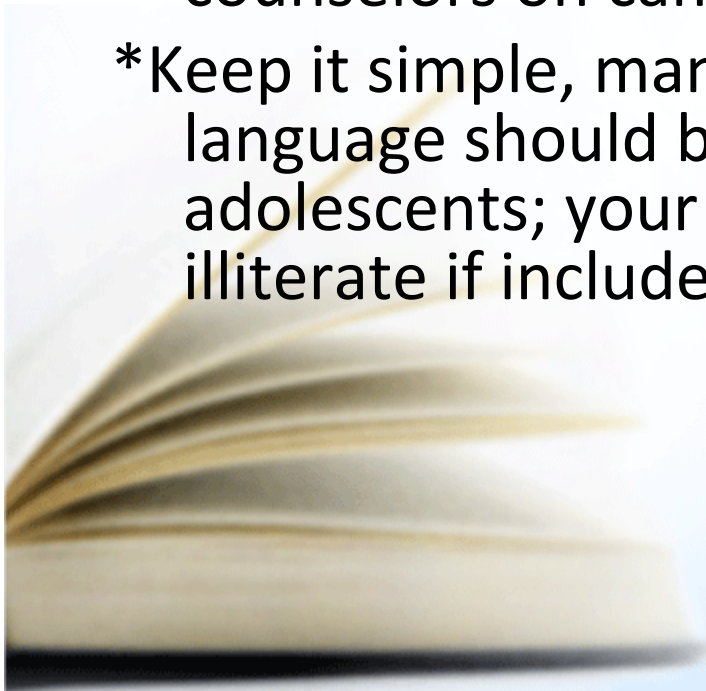
6. Ming wants to test the hypothesis that older people are less easily distressed by negative images such as car accidents than younger people, so he sets out to have older people rate the pictures. Some of these older people cannot read his consent form, so he summarizes the contents of it to them orally and signs for them.

# More cases

Tan and his group seek to examine attitudes toward divorce in older and younger people. He finds older people on the street and offers them \$50.00 each to complete this questionnaire. Though most hesitate to participate at first, with the offer of \$50.00, they readily agree later.

# Practical ethical issues for YOUR project

- \*Good use of data (20 per condition?)
- \*Some topics may be too controversial for a project (e.g., death, suicide, sexuality)
- \*Think through risks and prepare (e.g., counseling numbers, suicide hotline, social services, teachers, counselors on campus, etc.)
- \*Keep it simple, manageable, and clear (e.g., goals and language should be clear to all, including young adolescents; your “grandmother;” those who are illiterate if included, etc.)



Questions?????