Research Ethics: Ethical Practice

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Research ethics in practice

Third in series; follows ethical theories and ethical principles

• Every researcher’s responsibility
• Responsibility also of funders, commissioners, RECs/IRBs
• Time is crucial
• Ethical practice varies between countries and cultures
• Not just about filling in forms
• Applies to both quantitative and qualitative researchers, at all stages of the research process – and afterwards too
Ethical practice: planning research, literature review

• Is your research question a good one?
• Are you thinking through methodology and method?
• Need to think through possible ethical implications at every stage
• Important to read widely, including those you disagree with
• Take the time to understand what you read
• Cite carefully and locate your own work within the conversation
Ethical practice: data gathering, data analysis

- Confidentiality/anonymity/privacy – when appropriate and possible
- Respect for, and understanding of, participants
- Researcher safety and well-being important too
- Meticulous, laborious work; essential to do it thoroughly
- Often unsupervised, temptation can be fierce
- Integrity essential during analysis
Ethical practice: writing

• Choice of words
• Choice of structure
• Represent participants fairly and accurately
• Direct quotes from social media?
• Direct quotes when participants use a different language from you
• Represent your findings fairly and accurately
Ethical practice: presentation and dissemination

• Engage your audience
• Use more than one method
• Represent your work as fairly as you can
• Present and/or disseminate to participants
• Disseminate as widely as your resources allow
• Try for knowledge exchange where possible
Ethical practice: when research is done

- Ethical difficulties can arise even after you are ‘finished’ – be aware, be prepared
- Aftercare may be important for participants
- Aftercare may be important for you
- Where possible, accept opportunities to build on your research
- Also: celebrate!
For more information visit
www.ncrm.ac.uk/resources/online