

Senario: A researcher wishes to study support mechanisms between members of a discussion forum which deals with mental health issues, and how being physical active has helped them. The forum is a closed forum which is password protected and registration must be approved by a gatekeeper (a site administrator).

Concerns: Being able to access this data and explore the support mechanisms of the group is of particular interest to the researcher. The researcher is particularly interested in accessing the data since it is not currently part of a research project. The researcher is aware that this data is private – there is a high expectation of privacy on behalf of the users who feel it is a safe space where they will only be conversing with other people in the same situation. This raises questions about the ethics of accessing the data, and how to report the findings of the data if it is accessed.

If you were the researcher above, would it be possible to gain access to the data? If so, explain how you might go about gaining access to the data in the text-box on the slide.