

Ethics Handout

Objectives:

By the end of this module, you should be able to...

- Identify ethical problems in research designs
- Describe constraints and limitations on your course project
- Understand how to obtain informed consent for research projects

Activity

Identify the ethical problem with the following scenarios:

1. Jeff is running an experiment he wants to record on video. He starts a video tape behind a one-way mirror and then invites the participant into the lab. He then asks the participant to perform a task with a prototype he has developed...
2. Dr. Smithe has an experiment he wants to run for his research. He is currently teaching SENG 265, so to find participants easily, he recruits students from his class.
3. Christina is interviewing Jody about a new online dating service she is developing. She wants to learn about relationships to determine when and how people would use the service...
(Christina) "Could you tell me about your most recent romantic relationship?"
(Jody) "I don't really want to talk about that."
(Christina) "Your answer is really important for this study. I really need you to talk about this."

Major Ethical Issues:

Confidentiality

- Keep names confidential
- Assign ID numbers and identify participants by ID or pseudonym
- Do not identify subjects by other means (e.g., gender in an experiment with only 1 female)

Informed Consent: Participants should be informed of all procedures and potential risks

Right to withdraw participation: Participants have the right to withdraw their participation at any time

Coercion: Nobody should be forced or coerced into participating in or continuing to participate in a study

Ethics Approval:

To help us protect the people you plan to interview you must:

- Submit proposals for our review before interacting with human subjects (This will be required for assignments 1 and 6 and details will be provided in the assignments.)
- You may not be allowed to involve some special groups of users (e.g. young children, prisoners, mentally incompetent adults). Check with the instructor if you wish to work with a very specific group of users.
- Have participants sign an informed consent document.
- Be careful to keep collected information secure.
- Inform participants that they can withdraw at any time.