



# **CHAPTER 3**

## **Ethics in Behavioral Research**

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Summarize Milgram's obedience experiment
- Discuss the three ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report:
  - Beneficence
  - Autonomy
  - Justice
- List the information contained in an informed consent form
- Discuss potential problems obtaining informed consent
- Describe the purpose of debriefing research participants
- Contrast the categories of risk involved in research activities



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Summarize the ethical principles in the APA ethics code concerning research with human participants
- Describe the function of an Institutional Review Board
- Summarize the ethical principles in the APA ethics code concerning research with animals
- Discuss how potential risks and benefits of research are evaluated
- Discuss the ethical issue surrounding misrepresentation of research findings



# MILGRAM'S OBEDIENCE EXPERIMENT

- Study of the phenomenon of obedience to an authority figure
- Examined the effects of punishment on learning
- Results challenged beliefs about our ability to resist authority
- Important for understanding obedience in real life situations such as the Holocaust



# BELMONT REPORT

- **Belmont report:** Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research.
  - Defined the principles and applications that apply to medical and behavioural research investigations
  - It summarizes ethical principles and guidelines for research involving human subjects.
  - There are three core principles:
    - **Beneficence**
    - **Autonomy**
    - **Justice**



# BELMONT REPORT

- **Belmont report** cont.
  - **Beneficence:** protecting the autonomy (i.e., independence) of all people and treating them with courtesy and respect. With a few exceptions, researchers must be truthful and conduct no deception.
  - **Autonomy** (respect for persons), *thus is allowing for informed consent*. It can come into conflict with beneficence in the medical community, for example, when patients disagree with recommendations that healthcare professionals believe are in the patient's best interest.
  - **Justice:** *ensuring reasonable, non-exploitative, and well-considered procedures are administered fairly — the fair distribution of costs and benefits to potential research participants — and equally.*



# APA ETHICS CODE

- Applies to psychologists in their roles
- Principles include:
  - **Beneficence:** Need for research to maximize benefits and minimize any possible harmful effects of participation
  - **Fidelity and responsibility:** Psychologists establish relationships of trust with those with whom they work. *For example, by following through on promises to study subjects to provide incentives for participation.*



# APA ETHICS CODE

- **Integrity:** Psychologists:
  - Seek to promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in the science, teaching, and practice of psychology
  - Do not steal and cheat or engage in fraud, subterfuge, or intentional misrepresentation of fact
- **Justice:** Psychologists recognize that fairness and justice entitle all persons:
  - Access to and benefit from the contributions of psychology
  - Equal quality in the processes, procedures and services being conducted by psychologists





# APA ETHICS CODE

- **Respect for People's Rights and Dignity:** Psychologists:
  - *Respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals*
  - *Are aware that special safeguards may be necessary to protect the rights and welfare of persons or communities*
  - *Are aware and respect cultural, individual, and role differences*
  - *Try to eliminate the effect of biases on their work*



Ethics



# ASSESSMENT OF RISKS AND BENEFITS

- *To examine the potential problems and benefits of psychological research, it is known as a risk-benefit analysis.*
  - For example, participants may acquire:
    - Educational benefits, a new skill acquisition, or treatment for a psychological or medical condition
    - Material benefits
    - Personal satisfaction



# ASSESSMENT OF RISKS AND BENEFITS

- **Risk-benefit analysis:** *Examine potential risks and benefits that are likely to result from the research*
- Risks in psychological research
  - Physical harm
  - Psychological stress
  - Loss of privacy and confidentiality



# INFORMED CONSENT

- Potential participants in a research project are provided with information that might influence their active decision
- Informed consent form covers:
  - Purpose of the research
  - Procedures that will be used
  - Risks, benefits, and compensation
  - Confidentiality



# INFORMED CONSENT

- Assurance of voluntary participation and permission to withdraw
- Contact information for questions
- **Autonomy issues**
  - *Assent - Agreement by a minor in which a written consent form signed by a parent or guardian is required*
  - Coercion - Procedure that limits an individual's freedom to consent



# INFORMED CONSENT

- Withholding information and deception
  - **Deception:** *Occurs when there is active misrepresentation of information about the nature of a study*
- Is deception a major ethical problem in psychological research?



# DEBRIEFING

- Occurs after completion of the study
- *Opportunity for the researcher to deal with issues of withholding information, deception, and harmful effects of participation*
  - *It may help to negate any harmful effects caused by the experiment*
- Explains why deception was necessary
- Provides additional resources, if necessary



# DEBRIEFING

- Ensures participant leaves the experiment without any ill feelings toward the field of psychology
- Positive aspects
  - Opportunity to explain the purpose of the study and anticipated results
  - Most participants report positive experience
  - Research suggests that it is effective





# INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

- Institution that receives federal funds must have an IRB
  - Responsible for reviewing research at the institution
    - Must have minimum five members
    - One must be an external member
  - Research conducted by students, faculty and staff must be reviewed



# TYPES OF RESEARCH AND THE IRB

- **Exempt research:** Risk free
  - Review is not required
- **Minimal risk:** *Risk of harm is no greater than risk encountered in daily life or routine tests*
  - Routine review conducted by the IRB
- **Greater than minimal risk research**
  - Thorough review conducted by the IRB



# INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

- Impact on research
  - Extended time for approval of study
  - Submissions often need to be revised or clarified
  - Cautious around approval



# INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC)

- Composed of minimum one scientist, one veterinarian, and a community member
- Charged with reviewing animal research procedures and ensuring that all regulations are adhered to



# ISSUE OF MISREPRESENTATION

- **Fraud:** Fabrication of data
- **Plagiarism:** *Misrepresenting another's work as your own*
  - **Word-for-word plagiarism:** *Writer copies a section of another person's work word-for-word without providing:*
    - *Quotation marks or citation*
  - **Paraphrasing plagiarism:** *Words are indirectly copied, but the ideas are copied without attribution*



# APA ETHICS CODE: RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

- Where Research with Human Participants is Located in the Ethics Code
  - 8.01 Institutional Approval
  - 8.02 Informed Consent to Research
  - 8.03 Informed Consent for Recording Voices and Images in Research
  - 8.04 Client/Patient, Student, and Subordinate Research Participants
  - 8.05 Dispensing with Informed Consent for Research
  - 8.06 Offering Inducements for Research Participation
  - 8.07 Deception in Research
  - 8.08 Debriefing



# ETHICS AND ANIMAL RESEARCH

- Where Research with Animal Subjects is Located in the Ethics Code
  - 8.09 Humane Care and Use of Animals in Research
- APA has developed a more detailed Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in the Care and Use of Animals (American Psychological Association, 2002b)



# MISREPRESENTATION

- Where Information on Misrepresentation is Located in the Ethics Code
  - 8.10 Reporting Research Results
  - 8.11 Plagiarism





# CLASSIC STUDIES: MILGRAM'S STUDY OF OBEDIENCE & ZIMBARDO' STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT

- <http://ezproxy.occlib.noccd.edu/login?url=http://digital.films.com.ezproxy.occlib.noccd.edu/PortalPlaylists.aspx?aid=26240&xtid=40125&luid=7339>  
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