

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 behavioral research investigations
 - Beneficence
 - Autonomy (respect for persons)
 - Justice

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

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

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APA ETHICS CODE

- **Respect for persons:** 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

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ASSESSMENT OF RISKS AND BENEFITS

- Potential benefits of psychological research
 - Educational, new skill acquisition, or treatment for a psychological or medical condition
 - Material benefits
 - Personal satisfaction

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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

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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



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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

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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?

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DEBRIEFING

- Occurs after completion of the study
- Opportunity for the researcher to deal with issues of withholding information, deception, and harmful effects of participation
- Explains why deception was necessary
- Provides additional resources, if necessary

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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

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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

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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

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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

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

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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

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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

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APA ETHICS CODE: RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

- 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

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RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

- 8.05 Dispensing with Informed Consent for Research
- 8.06 Offering Inducements for Research Participation
- 8.07 Deception in Research
- 8.08 Debriefing

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ETHICS AND ANIMAL RESEARCH

- 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)

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MISREPRESENTATION

- 8.10 Reporting Research Results
- 8.11 Plagiarism

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MILGRAM'S & ZIMBARDO'S CLASSIC STUDIES

- Classic Studies in Psychology (13)
- <http://ezproxy.occlib.nocccd.edu/login?url=http://digital.films.com.ezproxy.occlib.nocccd.edu/PortalPlaylists.aspx?aid=26240&xtid=40125&loid=7339>
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