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Beyond Milgram:

Expanding Research Ethics Education to Participant Responsibilities

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Overview

In general psychology courses, undergraduate students learn about researcher responsibilities for protecting participant rights in research, including classic ethical dilemmas such as the Milgram obedience study (Milgram, 1963). However, introductory (and even advanced) psychology textbooks fail to address the reciprocal nature of the researcher-participant relationship, namely that participants also have ethical responsibilities (see Korn, 1988; Zuccherro, 2011). Given most research participants are recruited from these courses (Kimmel, 2007; Korn, 1988; Sieber & Saks, 1989), introductory psychology instructors have the opportunity to help influence psychological research by educating undergraduate students on research participant responsibilities.

To help in this endeavor, we first outline the notion of participant ethics and an educational approach to participant rights and responsibilities that addresses the reciprocal nature of the researcher-participant relationship (i.e., collaborative vs. transactional approach). We then provide four key resources for instructors wishing to incorporate participant ethics education into their courses: College and University websites that discuss participants rights and responsibilities (Appendix A), content for a learning module (that can be used online or offline; Appendix B), supplemental module resources (Appendix C), and references for additional resources and readings (Appendix D). Though these resources' primary aim is to supplement classroom presentations of research ethics in introductory psychology courses, the module content can be used in other psychology courses that have a research participation requirement. Additionally, the module can be used as a general departmental learning resource or required reading before students join the research participant pool.

Researcher and Participant Ethics

Ethics are norms (or standards) of conduct that dictate what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior in various situations (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 1998). There are expectations of ethical conduct for both the researcher and the participant in the research process, though participant ethics are often not explicitly conveyed through formal coursework as are researcher ethics. Psychology textbooks may (rightly so) devote more attention to researcher ethics due to the asymmetrical distribution of power in the researcher-participant relationship, with researchers clearly having more opportunities to engage in unethical conduct and abuse their higher position of power. Although “great power involves great responsibility” (Roosevelt, 1945), it is important to also note that low power status does not necessarily preclude participant responsibilities for ethical conduct. This is analogous to instructor-student relationships in the classroom, in which “the professor has the power to influence students’ lives in a number of significant ways” (Tabachnick, Keith-Spiegel, & Pope, 1998, p. 514). Regardless of this power differential, colleges and universities still hold standards for ethical conduct as students complete their instructor’s course requirements (i.e., refraining from academic dishonesty). Similar to academic integrity concerns (i.e., unethical behaviors that enhance a student’s grade), students are also expected to adhere to acceptable standards of behavior in a research setting, albeit these standards are certainly more limited in scope compared to ethical standards for researchers. Given that research participation is often a course requirement in introductory courses based on justifications regarding educational benefits for the student (Bowman & Waite, 2003; Landrum & Chaistain, 1995; Moyer & Franklin, 2011; Sieber & Saks, 1989), it is also worth debating whether violating participant responsibilities may qualify as academic dishonesty in some circumstances.

Various factors may influence ethical participant conduct, but the basic assumption of this learning module is that misconduct stems from students being unaware of (a) appropriate standards of participant behavior, (b) consequences of inappropriate participant behavior on research stakeholders (i.e., graduate students, faculty, and society), and (c) situational factors that lead to inappropriate participant behavior. Another assumption of this learning module follows Kuther's (2003) suggestion that ethics are best reinforced as a skill through the combination of formal coursework and practical experience, with emphasis placed on how even "good people are subject to bad behavior" (p. 340). As such, we hope faculty can use these resources to provide students with a formal organizing framework that complements (and perhaps even enhances) student research participation experiences.

A Collaborative Approach to the Research Process

Despite a call over 20 years ago to engage student participants more in the research process and to emphasize participant responsibilities (Korn, 1988), research and practice on the topic are sparse. Although some treatment of participant rights and responsibilities can be found on departmental websites and material (for examples, see Appendix A), the information often lacks a coordinated or engaging message that may be needed for maximal effectiveness.

An engaging message entails the consideration of the research process as a social contract between the researcher and participant, which requires ethical conduct from both parties. However, this social contract should be seen as more of a *collaborative* relationship in which both parties exchange knowledge rather than a *transactional* relationship where both parties are merely exchanging goods (data for credit). The distinction between collaborative and transactional relationships is similar to Gouldner's (1960) description of the difference between *reciprocity* (both sides have equal rights and responsibilities) and *complementarity* (one side's

rights are pursued at the expense of the other). Viewing the research relationship as collaborative elevates the ethical responsibilities of each party and conveys the appropriate tone for the seriousness of research participation, while also noting that educational benefits require active engagement from the student. By emphasizing a more active role in research ethics, rather than merely a passive role in relation to researcher responsibilities, faculty may improve the educational value of students' research experiences while simultaneously reducing the occurrence of inappropriate participant behaviors.

Participant Ethics Module: You are Not a Mouse

We acknowledge that a variety of both individual and situational potential factors (e.g., personality, methodology, incentives) can lead participants to violate their responsibilities (see Kraut et al., 2004; Krosnick, Narayan, & Smith, 1996; Malhotra, 2008). However, one of the most immediately accessible and actionable components influencing ethical research participation is awareness. Instructors need a simple, relatable way to inform undergraduates of not only their rights (as is commonly communicated) but also their responsibilities in a collaborative research relationship. To this end, we designed a learning module that contrasts the role of human participants in relation to a mouse, the quintessential psychology “participant.”

The content of the module can be found in Appendix B. Our general strategy in designing this module was to (a) increase the likelihood of retention through humor and cartoon visuals and (b) increase the adoption of ethical participant behaviors by providing an empowering (“being a good participant is rewarding and the right thing to do”) rather than controlling (“you have to be a good participant or you’ll be punished”) message. Research has shown that content-related humor increases attention, motivation, and retention of course material (Wanzer, Frymier, & Irwin, 2010), which may be particularly effective for topics that

students may find less interesting (Kher, Mostad, & Donahue, 1999). The benefit of content-related humor has also been seen in online classes, where humor has been related to more positive appraisals of the course and greater engagement from students (Anderson, 2011; LoSchiavo & Shatz, 2005).

We also took special care to emphasize the value of participant ethics to the individual, researchers, and society (rather than just focusing on why the behavior is wrong), as well as strategies to encourage a collaborative participant role in the process for educational purposes. Taking a value approach to educational material is informed by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryand, 200), which suggests motivation can be increased by tapping into the need for autonomy (“I want to do this”), whereas the controlling approach (“you should do this”) can actually decrease the motivation to comply (for an example in relation to antiprejudice material, see Legault, Gutsell, & Inzlicht, 2011). Thus, the “You Are Not a Mouse” theme aims to simultaneously empower participants to fully exercise their rights and responsibilities.

The module has four main sections: the value of research, participant rights and responsibilities, threats to participant responsibilities, and strategies for increasing engagement in the research process. The objective of the first section is to help participants recognize the value of psychological research to the participant and society. In this section, participants learn about the personal and broader societal value that they can obtain from participating in research studies. The objective of the second section is to explain rights and responsibilities. It describes participants rights to be asked for their informed consent, to withdraw or decline to participate, to received promised benefits and have questions answered, to have their data be kept confidential, to be debriefed if the research involved deception, and to learn how to report violations to their rights. The module emphasizes the collaborative relationship between participants and

researchers while describing participants' responsibilities to inform themselves (by diligently reading information provided regarding the study) prior to giving consent, to respond honestly, to engage fully with the tasks, to ask questions during debriefing, and to refrain from communicating with other potential participants. The objective of the third section is to identify threats to participant responsibilities. Presented as "mousetraps," this section discusses issues related to psychological and physical distance, time pressures and constraints, boredom and fatigue, demand characteristics, environmental distractions, and incentives. The objective of the final section is to help students apply strategies for increasing engagement in the research process as a participant. Using the acronym "C.A.T." as a mnemonic device (and easily related to being the antithesis of a mouse), we organize specific engagement strategies under three broad themes: Communication, Attention, and Trustworthiness. We present specific behaviors in each of these areas that will help students to appropriately participate in (and receive maximum benefits from) both online and laboratory research studies.

In addition to the module, we provide three supplementary resources that instructors might choose to incorporate into their lesson planning (see Appendix C). The first supplement consists of knowledge retention questions that the instructor may choose to administer at any time (before the module, following the module, during an exam, at the end of the year, etc.). The second supplement is a questionnaire asking students to report their perceptions of potential ethical issues in relation to specific research participant behaviors. Instructors can use the ethical perceptions page for class discussion before the module, and may also have students revisit these responses after the module. The third supplement is a list of questions that instructors can use for (a) guided class discussion or (b) a written assignment.

The module and supplements can be used in an online survey platform that can be obtained from the first author. You may access and use the following generic link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/online-participant-ethics-module> or request a customized version from the first author. Using an online survey platform can give instructors the freedom to have students complete the module outside of the classroom and quickly collect data regarding how much information students retain (Knowledge Retention Questions and Answers) and students' perceptions about ethics (Research Participation Ethics Questionnaire). Although our version of the online learning module is anonymous, instructors may want to add a response blank for student identification to track individual completion and retention (though we would then suggest ethical perceptions be collected anonymously in class).

Additional Resources: Themed Resources

Appendix D provides a resources list, organized around four major areas of research parallel to the topics covered in the participant ethics module. It provides a selection of resources for understanding and promoting ethical participant behavior including articles addressing the theoretical background of the participant ethics module, responsibilities of research participants, and threats to ethical research participation.

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instructor humor and student learning: Instructional humor processing theory.

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Zuccherro, R. A. (2011). Psychology ethics in introductory psychology textbooks. *Teaching of*

Psychology, 38, 110-113. doi: 10.1177/0098628311401583.

Appendix A: Website Resources

Examples of Psychology Websites Discussing Participant Ethics and Responsibilities

- Creighton University-Office of Research and Compliance Services
<http://www.creighton.edu/researchcompliance/humanresearchprotectionprogram/researchparticipantinformation/researchparticipantsrightsandresponsibilities/index.php>
- Stanford University-Department of Psychology
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/psychology/paidparticipantrights>
- Wagner College-Psychology Department
<http://www.wagner.edu/departments/psychology/rights>
- University of Ottawa-School of Psychology
http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/psy/eng/ispr_3rs.asp
- University of Virginia-Psychology Experiments Page
<http://www.virginia.edu/psychology/ppool/support/faq.cgi?answer=rights>
- California State University (Northridge)-Participant Information Packet
http://www.csun.edu/psychologyresearcharea/pdf/participant_information_packet.pdf

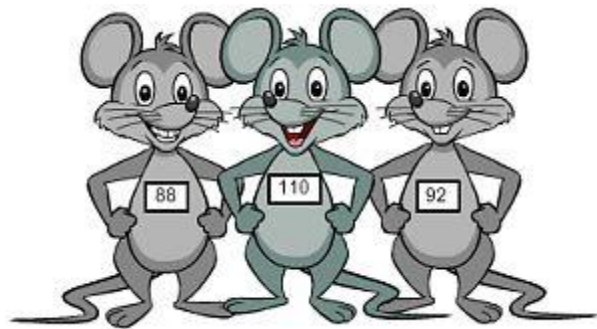
Appendix B: Participant Ethics Module

You Are Not a Mouse: Participant Rights and Responsibilities for Ethical Research Conduct

Welcome!

Our purpose in providing this learning module is to promote integrity in psychological science through research participant education. Psychological research that involves human participants is unique in that both the researcher *and* participants have rights and responsibilities to ensure ethical conduct. This module is primarily focused on the collaborative nature of research participation and the explanation of your true role in research participation. As such, this module will help you to:

1. Recognize the value of psychological research to the participant and society
2. Explain the role of participants in ethical research behavior (rights and responsibilities)
3. Identify threats to participant responsibilities
4. Apply strategies for increasing engagement in the research process as a participant



Time Commitment and Content: This module should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Completion Guidelines: This module should be completed in one sitting in a distraction-free environment. The minimum time requirement is 10 minutes, but this time may vary based on your reading pace and web navigation skills. Please close other software and windows (e.g., chat, email, video, music) before beginning, and open the module to full screen to minimize scrolling.

Overview

Ethics are standards of behavior that help us determine what is acceptable in any given situation. You are already familiar with many types of ethical standards, such as those related to completing your coursework at your academic institution (i.e., academic integrity policies). In psychological science, researchers also have ethical guidelines that they must follow in carrying out their research studies. When you participate in research, you have a number of rights that researchers must respect to uphold their ethical responsibilities.

Additionally, research participants also have responsibilities in the research process. This includes avoiding behaviors that can potentially undermine (a) the educational benefits of your participation and (b) the validity of the data you provide to researchers. We call these “mouse behaviors” in the module, as they often occur with passive research participation or a narrow focus on receiving incentives for participation (also known as “cheese chasing”). Unlike a mouse, you have many more opportunities to be an active, rather than passive, collaborator in the research process by exercising your participant rights and upholding your responsibilities.

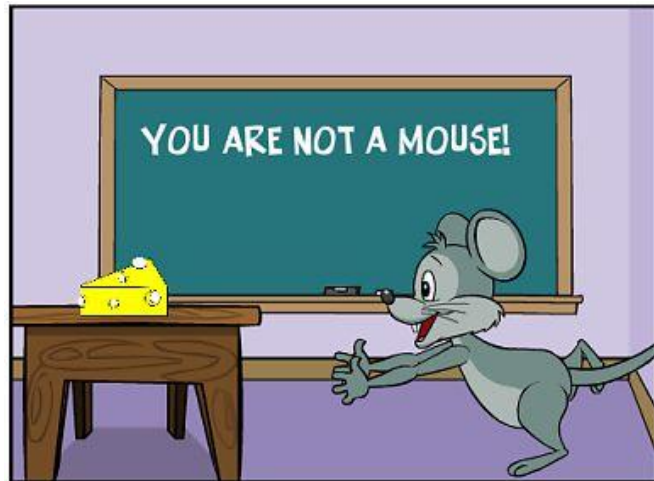
This module aims to help you become more engaged in your research participant role by providing information regarding your rights and responsibilities for ensuring ethical research conduct. The module will cover the following topics:

--The Value of Research Participation to You, the Researcher, and Society

--The Reciprocal Nature of the Research Contract: Participant Rights and Responsibilities

--Threats to Participant Responsibilities

--Strategies for Increasing Engagement in Research Participation



Value of Research Participation to the Individual and Society

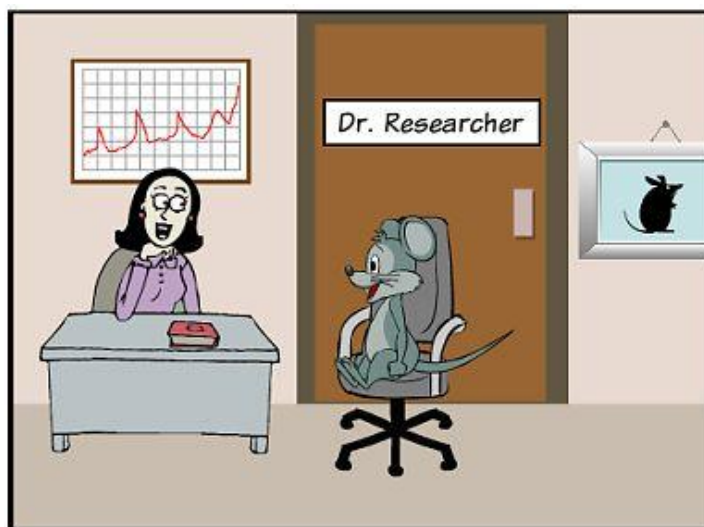
It's easy to approach research participation as "just another assignment" in your psychology course, especially given that many studies use online surveys requiring no direct interaction with a researcher. With competing demands across coursework and juggling other responsibilities, you might lose sight of the importance of research participation. However, research participation is a valuable opportunity for you to learn more about the research process (providing personal value) and make contributions to society through psychological knowledge (providing researcher and societal value).

Personal Value

Participating in research helps you link concepts you learn in class to real-world application. For example, researchers must provide "informed consent" to protect participants' rights. Informed consent ensures participants are fully informed about the nature and requirements of the study before agreeing to participate. By participating in experiments, you can see first-hand how informed consent affects your decision to participate in a given experiment.

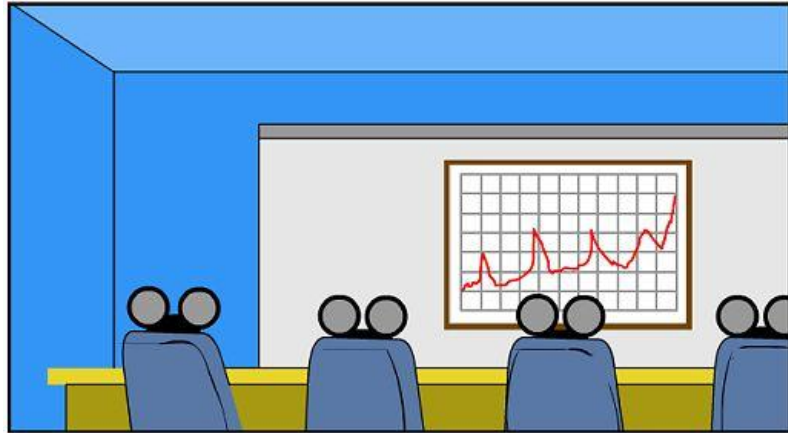
Additional value can be obtained from more contact with the researcher. Regardless of whether the study is in a laboratory or an online survey, you will be presented with contact information for the experimenter. You can ask the experimenter for more information regarding the purpose of the study or why you did certain types of activities or request to see the results of the study when it is complete. Keeping the contact information until your participation in the study is complete can also be helpful if you have questions or need clarification later.

It is important to keep in mind that the primary aim of psychological research is *not* to educate you on the research process; it is to understand human behavior. Thus, the potential educational benefits of your experience are highly dependent on you exercising your rights and responsibilities as a participant.



Researcher and Societal Value

Participating in research also helps you directly affect psychological knowledge, which is important to both researchers and society. Researchers are counting on you to providing high-quality data, whether this is through online surveys or laboratory tasks.



Your participation in research is important to researchers for a number of professional reasons. Research productivity is important for career advancement and promotion in academic institutions at all levels. In particular

- Faculty members are under considerable pressure to publish research to obtain funding for future projects (and supporting graduate students), as well as job security (i.e., tenure) at their school.
- Graduate students use your data to meet their graduation requirements for their degrees, and presenting and publishing research articles from these data help them be competitive on their job searches.
- Your fellow psychology students may be collecting data to present at conferences and/or publish to help them get into graduate school.

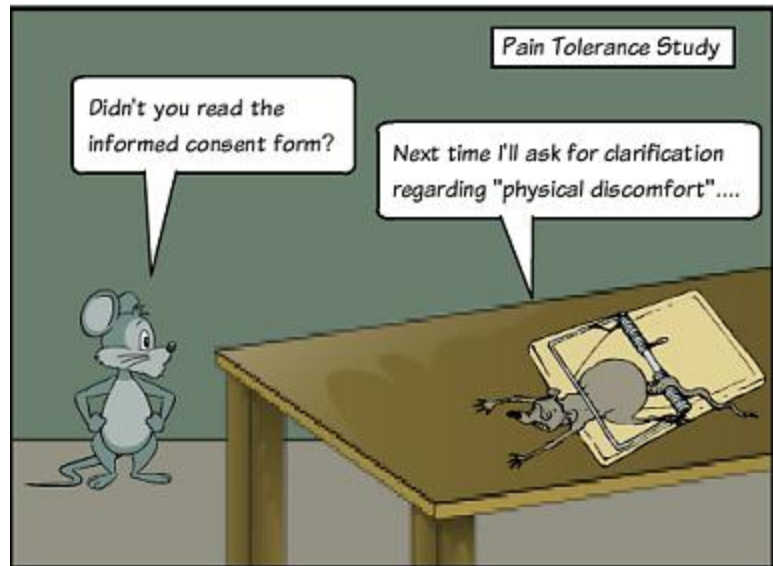
Keeping this information in mind, it's easy to see why researchers are interested in receiving high-quality data from participants to aids understanding of human behavior. These data can change the way people think about a topic, influence important policy decisions, and even appear in future psychology textbooks. Although many studies may not be published or receive "high profile" attention, the research may still be referenced in media or organizational reports as evidence for a particular idea about human behavior.

Reciprocal Nature of the Research Contract: Rights

Participant Rights

Psychology researchers are responsible for conducting research that adheres to professional ethical principles protecting participant rights. Key participant rights include:

1. **Right to Receive Informed Consent:** You should be provided with sufficient information regarding the study's purpose and expectations to make a decision on whether to participate. Note that this doesn't have to be fully detailed information, but enough for you to know if any activities may cause harm or discomfort (physical or psychological).



2. **Right to Withdraw or Decline Participation:** If at any point during the study you become uncomfortable for any reason, you have the right to withdraw from a study without penalty. You also have the right to request your data be removed from the study at any time. You also have the option not to participate in studies but to complete other activities for course credit.

3. **Right to Receive Benefits and Knowledge:** If the researcher promised you an incentive at the beginning of the study, you have a right to receive it with good faith effort, even if you withdraw. In terms of educational benefits, you have the right to receive honest answers to your questions at the completion of the study.

4. **Right to Have Confidentiality:** Your data should be kept either anonymous (no identifying information associated with the data) or confidential (identifying information limited to researchers who need it for specific purposes and no identifying information included in research reports).

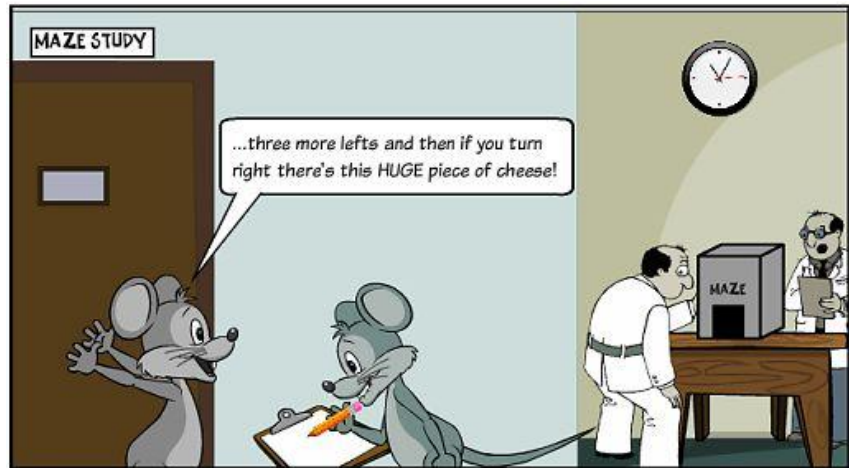
5. **Right to Receive Deception Debriefing:** If you participated in a study involving deception (you are misled about the real purpose of the study), you have the right to know why deception was used, and you have the option of removing your data if you feel the deception was unreasonable.

6. **Right to Report Violations:** If you feel your rights have been violated, you should first contact the experimenter to resolve the issue. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you can approach the Psychology Department chairperson or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at your university for the most serious issues.

Reciprocal Nature of the Research Contract: Responsibilities

Participant Responsibilities

As a participant in the study, you also have responsibilities that respects the researchers' time and efforts. Participant responsibilities include:



1. Responsibility to Inform Yourself before Giving Consent: You should read over any recruitment materials and study descriptions carefully before beginning the study. Ask the experimenter questions if you find some aspects confusing or too vague. Pay special attention to the time and activity requirements to avoid withdrawing from the study later or rushing through the tasks because of a time conflict with another appointment.
2. Responsibility to Act with Integrity: Make sure to answer questions honestly and avoid trying to make a good impression with the experimenter (e.g., trying to answer questions in the way you think the researcher would like you to). Also put forth a good faith effort to complete the entire study. If you feel the integrity of your responses was compromised, ask the experimenter to remove your data.
3. Responsibility to Engage Fully: Engagement is defined as being completely physically and psychologically present in your participant role. First, make sure to be on time for your research appointment and communicate any cancellation or need to reschedule with the experimenter as soon as possible. Second, you should take your role seriously and put forth your best effort to cooperate with the experimenter. This includes listening to or reading all instructions and completing tasks appropriately.
4. Responsibility to Clarify Debriefing: At the end of the study, you should ask the researcher any remaining questions you have about the purpose of the study and provide any additional information regarding your experiences that you think the researcher would find informative. This is your chance to enhance the educational value of your participation for both yourself and the researcher.
5. Responsibility to Keep Confidentiality: You should not discuss the study with other potential participants beyond what is found in the study recruitment materials or the informed consent document. This includes information you learned about the specific purpose of the study, as well as answers or study activities.

Threats to Participant Responsibilities

Now that you are more familiar with your rights and responsibilities as a participant, it is important to outline potential factors that may threaten your responsibilities: in other words, “mousetraps.” Research designs that are meant to provide added convenience and protection for you as a participant (for example, online surveys) are the most likely to encourage “mouse” behaviors (violations of participant responsibilities). Not following instructions, random responding, careless task completion, or providing dishonest answers can all undermine data integrity, which can mask important findings in psychological research.

Mousetraps: Potential Threats to Participant Responsibilities

1. Psychological and Physical Distance: Not having face-to-face interactions with the experimenter (like in online studies) provides more distance between you and the experimenter than in laboratory studies. When people feel their responses cannot be traced back to them (i.e., less responsibility), this can lead to decreased engagement and integrity during the study.

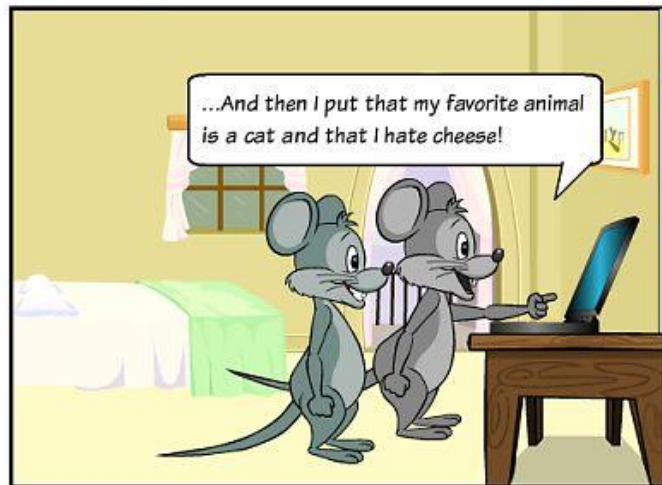
2. Time Pressures/Constraints: Completing studies can be difficult when managing other time commitments, which can affect your level of engagement in the study (physical and psychological).

3. Boredom and Fatigue: Some tasks or questions may not be as interesting to you as others and you may become tired after participating in lengthy procedures or surveys.

4. Demand Characteristics: Aspects of the experimental environment (such as description of the study, measures used, or experimenter behavior) can provide cues regarding what the experimenter hopes to find. Participants may (consciously or unconsciously) change their behavior or responses based on their interpretation of the purpose of the study.

5. Environmental Distractions: Aspects of the environment that can prevent full engagement in the study include cell phone use (including texting), computer use unrelated to the task (web surfing, chat, email), or talking to others during the study. Experimenters have more control over these distractions by conducting studies in the laboratory, but it is especially critical for participants to control distractions themselves for online surveys.

6. Incentives: Many studies provide incentives for participation, including credit for courses, money, or entry into a prize raffle. However, incentives can increase motivation to move through the survey or tasks quickly in order to receive the incentive with the least amount of effort.



Strategies for Increasing Engagement in Research Participation

There are a number of strategies for reducing “mousetraps.” Specifically, the following tips will help you increase your engagement in the research process through communication, attention, and trustworthiness (C.A.T.). C.A.T. strategies are important for both laboratory and online studies to help you avoid slipping into “mouse” behaviors.



Communication:

1. **Notify:** For laboratory studies, ask the experimenter to clarify directions if you are unfamiliar with the location. For survey studies, email the experimenters to let them know if you were disconnected or interrupted.
2. **Clarify:** Promptly ask for clarification, or make notes if online, regarding confusing questions, tasks, or other issues. After completing an online survey, email the experimenter for clarifications if needed.
3. **Follow-Up:** At the end of the study, ask (or email) the experimenter further questions regarding the purpose of the study and share any experiences you think may aid the experimenter in understanding your responses. Keep experimenter contact information for any follow-up questions.

Attention:

4. **Slow Down:** Read all instructions for surveys and tasks thoroughly.
5. **Control Your Environment:** For online studies, find a quiet place to complete the survey with reliable Internet connectivity; a library may be the best option. If you are completing the survey at home, go to a secluded room away from others.
6. **Control Your Time:** Avoid signing up for study times that are directly before or after your classes or other appointments. Allow at least a 30-minute buffer between laboratory appointments (or more depending on travel time/walking distance). For online surveys, allow for more time than expected to avoid time pressures.
7. **Power Off:** Silence or turn off cell phones when beginning a laboratory study. For online studies, turn off electronic devices (cell phones, radio, TV) and close other computer windows that would be a distraction (chat and email).

Trustworthiness:

8. **Verify:** Read carefully to ensure that you are eligible to take the survey. Some surveys may be open only to individuals of a certain sex, ethnicity, or other requirements. Do not misrepresent yourself to receive an incentive.
 9. **Take Your Role Seriously:** For online studies, exhibit the same behaviors as you would doing the survey in the experimenter’s laboratory. For laboratory studies, arrive on time (or 5-10 minutes early) and exert your best effort to complete tasks as instructed.
 10. **Keep it Confidential:** Make sure not to discuss the study tasks or survey items with other potential participants. If in doubt, ask the experimenter what you can share.
-

Learning Module Complete!

Thanks for completing the module! We hope that you can use this information to make your research participation experiences more meaningful and enjoyable.

For further readings related to this module's content, please see the following resources:

American Psychological Association. (2002). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. *American Psychologist*, 57(12). <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>

Korn, J. H. (1988). Students' roles, rights, and responsibilities as research participants. *Teaching of Psychology*, 15, 74-78. doi.org/10.1207/s15328023top15022.

Appendix C: Supplemental Module Materials

Knowledge Retention Questions

Below you will find 10 questions designed to test your knowledge of the concepts you just learned.

1. Neglecting participant responsibilities may undermine the educational benefits of your participation and
 - a. Your rights as a participant
 - b. The validity of the data you provide to researchers
 - c. Researcher responsibilities
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
2. All of the following statements are correct about research participation, EXCEPT:
 - a. The aim of psychological research is to educate you on the research process
 - b. Research participation can help you link concepts you learn in class to real-world application
 - c. Your data may be used to affect important policy decisions
 - d. Exercising your rights as a participant may increase your personal value of research participation
 - e. Obtaining good data is important to researchers for career advancement
3. Harry signed up for a laboratory experiment about exercise and well-being. After arriving at the room to complete the study, the experimenter tells him that he cannot participate because only women are eligible to participate for this particular study. The experimenter notes that the study's description in the recruitment materials say that the study is for women only. Harry is frustrated because he needs the credit and no other studies are currently available for him to participate in. He asks the experimenter if he could still do the study to get credit, and the experimenter refuses to let him participate. Harry leaves the room upset because he felt like he wasted his time showing up to the experiment. Which of Harry's participant rights may have been violated?
 - a. Withdraw or Decline Participation
 - b. Receive Benefits and Knowledge
 - c. Given Confidentiality
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above



4. About halfway through a research interview in the laboratory, Sally started becoming uncomfortable with some of the sensitive questions the researcher asked her and asked if she could be excused. The experimenter told her that she needed to continue to receive her credit, and that she only had to answer two more questions to complete the study. The experimenter also told her that, because Sally was told that she'd be asked sensitive questions and that answers are recorded anonymously, she was required to finish the study. Which of Sally's participant rights may have been violated?
- a. Receiving Informed Consent
 - b. Being Given Confidentiality
 - c. Withdrawing or Declining Participation
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
5. Jane is having an unusually busy week, so she decides to participate in a couple of online surveys during class time for credit. She skims through the information on the first page regarding the nature of study, then completes the rest of the survey items while the instructor lectures. She does the same for another online survey, but closes out of it early when she sees that she can still get credit for completing just half of the survey. Which of the following participant responsibilities did Jane violate?
- a. Engaging Fully
 - b. Being Informed Before Giving Consent
 - c. Acting with Integrity
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
6. Jack participated in a study that he thought was really fun, especially after he found out that the experimenter awarded cash prizes and the real purpose of the study was to see how money motivated performance on video games. The next day, Jack told his General Psychology classmates that he liked participating in his last research study. When they asked what it was about, he told them what the title of the study was and some information that could be found in the recruitment statement (i.e., that he played some video games and it lasted about an hour). Which of the following participant responsibilities did Jack violate?
- a. Being Debriefed
 - b. Keeping Confidentiality
 - c. Being Informed Before Giving Consent
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
7. Jill decided she needed to spend more time studying for her afternoon exam, so she skipped the laboratory study in the university without notifying the experimenter. When the experimenter contacted her, she rescheduled for the next day, but also showed up late. Which of the following participant responsibilities did Jill violate?
- a. Incentives
 - b. Being Informed Before Giving Consent
 - c. Engaging Fully
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above

8. Which of the following threats to responsibilities (“mousetraps”) would be more common in online surveys than laboratory studies?
- Psychological/physical distance and environmental distractions
 - Demand characteristics and environmental distractions
 - Boredom/fatigue and incentives
 - Demand characteristics and incentives
 - Psychological/physical distance and demand characteristics
9. John went to a quiet place in the laboratory to take an online survey after his classes were done for the day so he wouldn’t feel rushed. He turned off his cell phone and only opened one browser to complete the survey. Which of the C.A.T. strategies for avoiding “mousetraps” best describes John’s behaviors?
- Communication
 - Attention
 - Trustworthiness
 - All of the above
 - None of the above
10. After carefully reading the informed consent for an online study, Mary was confused as to whether she was truly eligible to participate or not. The study description was unclear about whether participants needed to currently be in a romantic relationship, or whether they just had been in one in the past. Mary emailed the experimenter for clarification and found out she actually did need to be in a romantic relationship to participate. Given she had just broken up with her significant other last week, she told the experimenter she could no longer participate and excused herself from the study. Which of the C.A.T. strategies for avoiding “mousetraps” best describes Mary’s behaviors?
- Communication
 - Attention
 - Trustworthiness
 - All of the above
 - None of the above



Knowledge Retention Answers

1. Neglecting participant responsibilities may undermine the educational benefits of your participation and _____.

B: Neglecting participant responsibilities also undermines the validity of the data you provide to researchers. It does not affect your rights as a participant or researchers' responsibilities for protecting your rights, as this is a separate concern in relation to researcher ethics.



2. All of the following statements are correct about research participation, EXCEPT:

A: The aim of psychological research is not to educate you on the research process; it is to understand human behavior. Thus, the potential educational benefits of your experience are highly dependent on you exercising your rights as a participant. Ask the experimenter for more information of the study, especially if there was deception (Right to Deception Debriefing). You also have the right to learn the true purpose of the study or why you did certain types of activities. You can also ask the experimenter to send you the results of the study when it is complete.

3. Which of Harry's participant rights may have been violated?

E: None of Harry's rights have been violated. He does not have a right to participate in a study for which he is ineligible or receive benefits from that study. In fact, Harry should have carefully read the recruitment materials to avoid the inconvenience of showing up for that particular experiment. Harry will have to patiently wait for another study to become available to receive his necessary credit.

4. Which of Sally's participant rights may have been violated?

C: Sally's right to withdraw was violated. She was clearly given informed consent and her right to confidentiality was protected, but upholding these rights does not negate her right to withdraw or decline participation. If at any time participants become uncomfortable with aspects of the study, they still have a right to withdraw. Although not listed, Sally also has a right to receive benefits (credit) for the study because she made a good faith effort toward completion, and she also has the right to report this researcher violation.

5. Which of the following participant responsibilities did Jane violate?

D: Jane violated all of the listed participant responsibilities. She did not read over the recruitment materials carefully before completing the study, violating her responsibility to be informed before giving consent (which is assumed by her continuing on to the rest of the survey). She also was not fully engaged, as she was doing another activity (listening to the lecture) while completing the study. Although not directly a participant issue, this is also disrespectful to the classroom instructor. Finally, Jane did not act with integrity, as she did not put forth a good faith effort to complete the entire second study.

6. Which of the following participant responsibilities did Jack violate?

E: Jack did not violate any of his participant responsibilities according to this description. There is no information regarding consent or debriefing issues, and Jack did not mention anything about the study to his classmates that could not be found in the study's recruitment materials or informed consent. He did not tell them anything about the study's purpose, and adhered to his responsibility of keeping confidentiality.

7. Which of the following participant responsibilities did Jill violate?

C: Jill violated her responsibility to engage fully. Jill should have communicated her cancellation to the researcher beforehand, as the researcher was left waiting for her to arrive. Jill's lateness is also problematic, as it can disrupt other participants' scheduled appointments.

8. Which of the following threats to participant responsibilities ("mousetraps") are more common in online surveys than laboratory studies?

A: Online surveys provide more psychological/physical distance between the experimenter and the participant than laboratory studies due to the lack of experimenter presence. Online studies also have more potential for environmental distractions than do laboratory studies because the experimenter has less control over the study surroundings. Demand characteristics may actually be reduced in online studies through less contact with the experimenter. Boredom/fatigue and incentives are likely to depend on the type of tasks or rewards used, not necessarily on the method of delivery (online vs. laboratory).

9. Which of the C.A.T. strategies for avoiding "mousetraps" best describes John's behaviors?

B: John has done a great job with using a variety of strategies to increase his attention to the task.

10. Which of the C.A.T. strategies for avoiding "mousetraps" best describes Mary's behaviors?

D: Mary has done a great job of using strategies in all three categories. Carefully reading the informed consent shows she is properly devoting attention to the task. Getting clarification regarding eligibility shows good communication with the researcher. And finally, excusing herself from the study because she did not qualify (even though she could have lied and stayed in the study without the researcher knowing) shows that Mary is committed to trustworthiness in her participant role.



Research Participation Ethics Questionnaire: What Do You Think?

Please answer the questions below regarding your perceptions of research participant behaviors in relation to potential ethical issues:

| | No ethical issue | Minor ethical issue | Major ethical issue |
|---|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Misrepresenting aspects of yourself to complete an online survey for credit (example: saying you are in a relationship for a study on Couple Behavior when in fact you are not). | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 2. Providing random responses on a survey or task in order to finish it quickly. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 3. Talking about the procedures or hidden purpose of a study to other people in your class or others who have not yet participated in the study. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 4. Choosing to participate in research studies over alternative forms of receiving class credit (example: essays, interviews, or attending talks) only because it “seems easier” | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 5. Arriving late to a research experiment. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 6. Answering questions on a survey based on what you think the experimenter wants to see. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 7. Not showing up to a research experiment. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 8. Doing other activities while completing an online survey (example: talking on the phone, texting, emailing, chatting). | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 9. Completing an online survey during class. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 10. Not reading the recruitment statement or informed consent form. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 11. Not asking the researcher questions when you are confused about a question or task. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 12. Dropping out of a study early or part-way through because you know you can still get full credit. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 13. Skimming instructions to finish a survey or task more quickly. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 14. Choosing only online studies over laboratory studies (regardless of the study’s purpose). | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 15. Purposefully putting wrong answers to “mess with” the data. | 0 | 1 | 2 |

Research Participant Ethics: Discussion Questions

1. Revisit your responses on the “What Do You Think?” questionnaire.
 - a. What types of behaviors did you mark as posing major ethical issues and why?
 - b. Were there any behaviors that you perceived as not being an ethical issue?
 - c. Did any of your perceptions change after viewing the module?

2. Are participants’ responsibilities as much an ethical issue as researchers’ responsibilities?

3. Who should be responsible for making research experiences educationally valuable to participants? Is it the participant, the researcher(s), the faculty member whose course the research participation is offered, the department overseeing the participant research pool, or someone else?

4. As a student, you are already aware of issues surrounding academic dishonesty (i.e., behaviors that enhances a student’s grade unethically) and perhaps you are even aware of specific policies at your institution. If research participation is linked to course credit in any way (e.g., course requirements or extra credit), should neglecting participant responsibilities be considered a form of academic dishonesty?

5. Think back to the six types of “mousetraps” that can threaten participant responsibilities (psychological/physical distance, time pressure/constraints, etc.). Are any of these threats similar to factors influencing academic dishonesty in completing your coursework?

Instructor Notes: Question 1 assists students in exploring individual variation in ethical perceptions and any changes due to the module. It should also stimulate discussion on circumstances in which some behaviors may not be considered unethical or why others may always be considered unacceptable. Question 2 can promote discussions of power and responsibility, and relative consequences when each side of the researcher-participant contract is breached. Question 3 helps students think about who is in the best position to ensure the educational value of participation and/or who is accountable for this goal. Questions 4 and 5 help students compare and contrast concepts they’ve learned from this model into other forms of ethical behavior relevant to their student status, namely academic integrity.

Appendix D: Themed Resources

The Collaborative Research Relationship – The following articles provide a theoretical basis for the foundation of a collaborative relationship in research participation, including prosocial orientation and complementary rights and responsibilities. Additionally, Korn (1988) provides a comprehensive look at student participation in research studies; he addresses the roles, rights, and responsibilities of research participants from a collaborative point of view. Since the publication of his article, very few researchers have tackled participant responsibilities, and none has addressed the topic in such a comprehensive way.

Balliet, D., Parks, C., & Joireman, J. (2009). Social value orientation and cooperation in social dilemmas: A meta-analysis. *Group Processes & Intergroup relations*, 12, 533-547. doi: 10.1177/1368430209105040.

Gouldner, A. W. (1960). The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review*, 25, 161-178. doi: 10.2307/2092623.

Korn, J. H. (1988). Students' roles, rights, and responsibilities as research participants. *Teaching of Psychology*, 15, 74-78. doi.org/10.1207/s15328023top15022.

Careless Responding – Careless, or random, responding is a significant concern with survey research. The following resources provide background on the prevalence of this kind of participant behavior, identifying the careless responder and the impact of careless responding on the validity of data.

Beach, D. A. (1989). Identifying the random responder. *Journal of Psychology, 123*, 101-103.

Blackhardt, G. C., Brown, K. E., Clark, T., Pierce, D. L., & Shell, K. (2012). Assessing the adequacy of postexperimental inquiries in deception research and the factors that promote participant honesty. *Behavior Research Methods, 44*, 24-40, doi: 10.3758/s13428-011-0132-6.

Crede, M. (2010). Random responding as a threat to the validity of effect size estimates in correlational research. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 70*, 596-612. doi:10.1177/0013164410366686.

Huang, J. L., Curran, P. G., Keeney, J., Poposki, E. M., & DeShon, R. P. (2012). Detecting and deterring insufficient effort responding to surveys. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 27*, 99-114, doi: 10.1007/s10869-011-9231-8.

Meade, A. W., & Craig, S. B. (in press). Identifying careless responses in survey data. *Psychological Methods*. doi: 10.1037/a0028085

Stroop, J. R. (1938). Factors affecting speed in serial verbal reactions. *Psychological Monographs, 50*, 38-48.

Participant Crosstalk – Crosstalk among study participants entails sharing information about a study’s procedures or purpose with other potential participants. This is particularly problematic in psychological research as it can lead to “information contamination” in participant pools that can undermine the effectiveness of experimental manipulations. The following resources provide estimations of the prevalence of participant crosstalk, as well as suggestions for reducing the occurrence of this research participant behavior.

Edlund, J. E., Sagarin, B. J., Skowronski, J. J., Johnson, S. J., & Kutter, J. (2009). Whatever happens in the laboratory stays in the laboratory: The prevalence and prevention of participant crosstalk. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *35*, 635-642 . doi: 10.1177/0146167208331255.

Klein, K., & Chevront, B. (1990). The subject-experimenter contract: A reexamination of subject pool contamination. *Teaching of Psychology*, *17*, 166-169. doi: 10.1207/s15328023top1703_6.

Tindell, D. R., & Bohlander, R. W. (2005). Participants' naiveté and confidentiality in psychological research. *Psychological Reports*, *96*, 963-969. doi: 10.2466/pr0.96.3c.963-969.

Situational and Individual Factors Threatening Participant Responsibilities – Many factors may contribute to the occurrence of inappropriate behaviors in research participation. Two situational factors that may encourage these types of behaviors are time (i.e., student participants pressed for time at the end of a semester) and online components of studies. The following resources provide evidence for the influence of time pressure and the unsupervised online environment on participant behavior. Additionally, a participant's impression of the researcher's ethics is also an important component to determining how participants respond to their duties. The following resources provide evidence to suggest that when students perceive themselves to be coerced into participating, the occurrence of problematic research behaviors may increase. Some resources address methods for obtaining high quality data under these concerns.

- Evans, R., & Donnerstein, E. (1974). Some implications for psychological research of early versus late term participation by college students. *Journal of Research in Personality, 8*, 102-109. doi:10.1016/0092-6566(74)90050-6.
- Kraut, R., Olson, J., Banaji, M., Bruckman, A., Cohen, J., & Couper, M. (2004). Psychological research online: Report on board of scientific affairs' advisory group on the conduct of research on the internet. *American Psychologist, 59*, 105-117. doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.59.2.105.
- Leak, G. K. (1981). Student perception of coercion and value of participation in psychological research. *Teaching of Psychology, 8*, 147-149. doi.org/10.1207/s15328023top08034.
- Malhotra, N. (2008). Completion time and response order effects in web surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 72*, 14-934. doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfn050.
- Mason, W., & Suri, S. (2011). Conducting behavioral research on Amazon's Mechanical Turk. *Behavior Research Methods, 44*, 1-23, doi: 10.3758/s13428-011-0124-6.
- Miller, W. E., & Kreiner, D. S. (2008). Student perception of coercion to participate in psychological research. *North American Journal of Psychology, 10*, 53-64.
- Nosek, B. A., Banaji, M. R., & Greenwald, A. G. (2002). E-research: Ethics, security, design, and control in psychological research on the internet. *Journal of Social Issues, 58*, 161-176. doi.org/10.1111/1540-4560.00254.