

Managing Challenging Interviews

Day 1 10th November 2020

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Learning objectives

Identify the factors affecting levels of vulnerability

Identify the potential risks to participants and researchers

Develop strategies for managing these risks

Plan and practice techniques to manage challenging interview dynamics

Session 1

**Assessing and managing risk
among participants in
vulnerable and / or
challenging situations**

Why consider vulnerability & risk

Ethical implications

- Responsibility to participants
- Responsibility to researchers

Legal implications

Data quality issues

Defining vulnerability & risk

It's not the person who is vulnerable but their situation

Vulnerability

- Anyone less able than normal to give informed consent and / or more likely than normal to be harmed by research process

Risk

- Participation could cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks of everyday life
- Social research is generally low risk

Factors influencing vulnerability

Static factors

- Demographics, health

Dynamic factors

- Health, behaviour, research context, education, experience

Some groups more likely to be in vulnerable situations

Qualitative research brings out vulnerability

Potential risks to participant

Substance of interview

- Reawaken old feelings or memories
- Uncover previously hidden feelings
- Create additional concerns

Context of interview

- Concerns over what shared
- Disclosure

Interpersonal - feelings of failure

Unmet expectations

Potential risks to researcher safety and well-being

Researchers have a responsibility to manage themselves and teams responsibly

Consider researcher physical safety

- Risk assessment
- Safety system/
who knows where
you are?
- Financial loss,
theft

Consider researcher mental well-being

- Awareness of
sensitive/ difficult
issues arising from
the study
- System of support
and de-briefing

Potential risks to data quality

Purposive sampling

Recruitment

- Selection bias of gatekeepers
- Broken appointments

Interviewing

- Difficulties in asking / answering questions

Resources

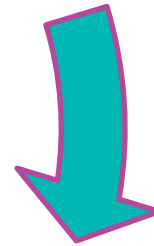
- Extra precautions for interviews e.g. external support
- Ethical governance

Assessing risk

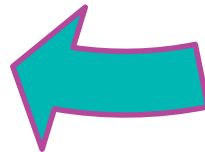
Dissemination



Design



Data
collection



Analysis
and
reporting

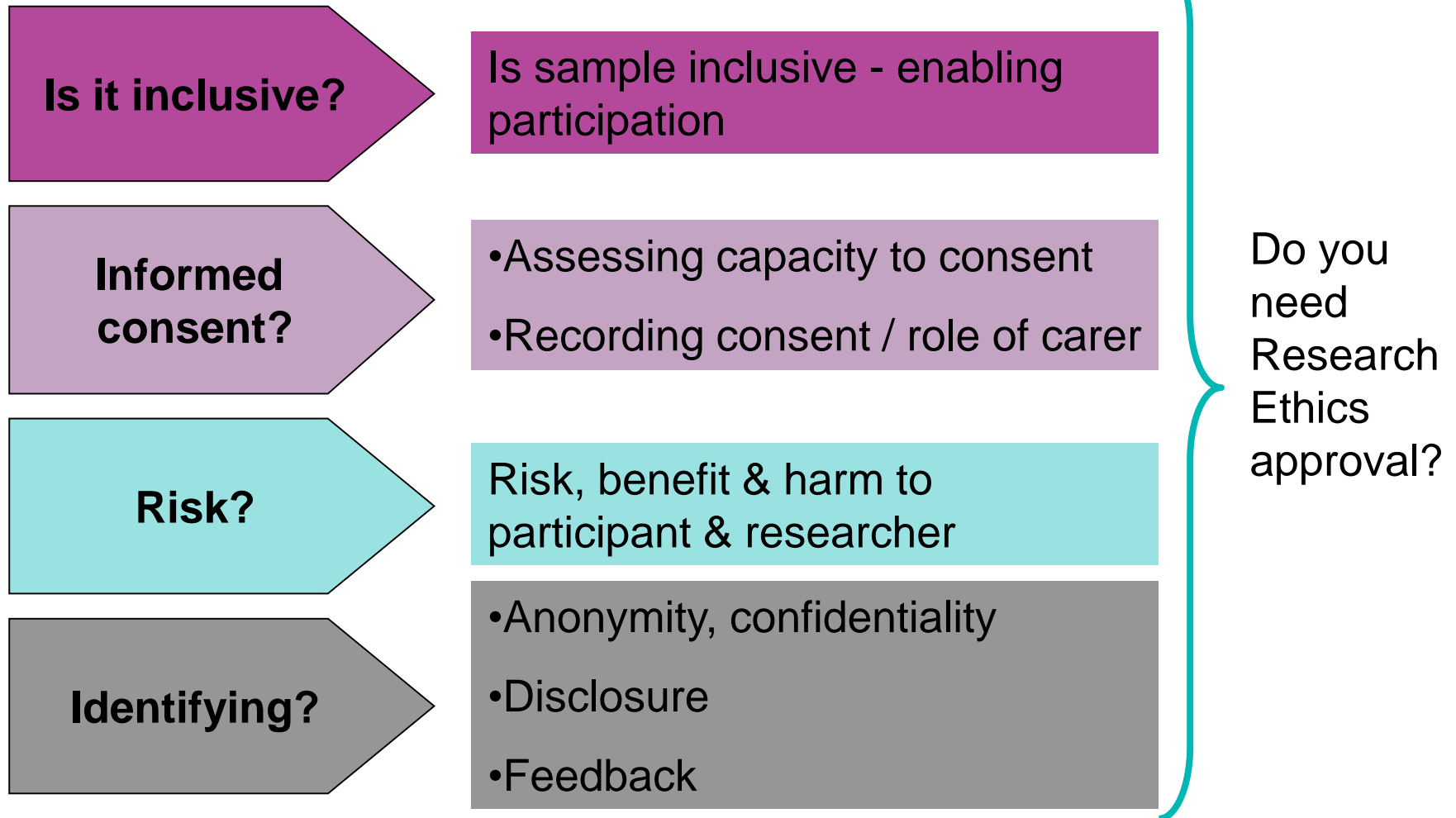


Design & planning

Manage risk for organisation, researchers and participants

- Can researchers opt-in to the study...?
- Nature and extent of pre-fieldwork briefing – external speakers / trainers...?
- In the field: safety system, team debriefs, external support...?
- How many interviews per day...?

Ethical considerations and conduct – is study ethical & useful?



Informed consent – a process

What to convey?

Balance – enough information without overload

When to gain consent?

- Not once and for all- in *stages!*
 - ✓ Initial recruitment
 - ✓ Confirmation letter
 - ✓ Prior to start of interview
 - ✓ After the interview

Researcher satisfied
participant understands
nature of interview and
their involvement

- Written or verbal consent? E.g. consent form

Role of gatekeepers (Nind, 2008)

There may be a **hierarchy of gatekeepers**

- Senior person in an organisation
- People in direct contact with potential participants

Potential to **block / facilitate** access

- Provide them with information about the study
- Importance of building trust and rapport
- They need to be convinced of the benefits
- They may be protective / controlling

Data collection (1)

Consider interview location and environment

- Who decides?
- Safe and comfortable space
- Free from disruptions, maintains anonymity and confidentiality
- Will anyone else be there e.g. carer
 - Implications for dynamics and safety
- Potential risks to researcher

Data collection (2)

Listen to *what* is said and *how* it is said

Consider what is *not* said

- Is anything implied?
- What about the environment?

Does risk identified pose future risks

- To who? Is action needed?

Data collection (3)

Try to leave participant at ease

- Debrief might be needed
- Support leaflet / further information
- Research team contacts

Debrief individual in carer role if applicable / appropriate

- Confidentiality of discussion
- Leave participant in 'safe space'

Ongoing risk assessment & management

Reflect / debrief with colleagues and project team

Where action needed

- Report incidents as per protocols
- Revise risk assessment and management strategies
- Consider own involvement on project
- Anything else...?

Practical: Assessing and managing risk

Group exercise:

Assessing risk and other ethical considerations among participants in vulnerable and / or challenging situations.