



# **Professional skills M45**

---

## **Ethics and ethical practice**

**Jennifer Brown 2005**



# Learning objectives

---

- Allow you to distinguish values, moral and ethical issues
- Encourage you to think about the problems and dilemmas in conducting research
- To have an overview of ethical considerations with respect to relationships with colleagues/supervisors/trainees



# Learning objectives- 'Continued'

---

- To consider these when designing your own studies
- Enable you to examine critically the research of others
- To know when to ask for help
- Prepare to defend possible criticisms of your own research



# Ethical dilemmas

---

**How would you respond to the following hypothetical ethical dilemmas?**

# Haas, Malouf and Mayerson (1986)



---

- Accept an offer from an accountant client to complete tax return in lieu of payment



# Haas, Malouf and Mayerson (1986)

---

**Agree: 7%**



## Haas, Malouf and Mayerson (1986)

---

Report to BPS a psychologist you have previously met but don't know well that you can see on a TV advert endorsing a health spa. He say "As a child psychologist I find relaxing important so I go to Harrogate Spa to get my head and body together.



## Haas, Malouf and Mayerson (1986)

---

**42% would report to Professional Body**

**32% would do nothing**

**25% would speak to the person**

## Haas, Malouf and Mayerson (1986)



---

- Would accept as a client a man who asks for sex therapy. You understand the general principles but it is not your area of expertise. He looks like an interesting prospective client and you feel you would learn a lot by taking him on.



## Haas, Malouf and Mayerson (1986)

---

**49% would not accept him**

**45% would accept him**



## Haas, Malouf and Mayerson (1986)

---

- You are treating a former soldier with a history of impulsive antisocial actions. You have established a sound therapeutic relationship (he having failed previously to complete a course of therapy). At the end of a session he tells you he is planning to kill his current girlfriend because she has been going out with someone else.

## Haas, Malouf and Mayerson (1986)



---

**87% would inform him that you must inform his girlfriend and/or the police**

**8% would contact the girlfriend**

**5% would discuss further at the next session**



# Hippocratic Oath

---

- I will follow that system of regimen (**knowledge**) which, according to my ability and judgement, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and sustain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous (**integrity**).
- With purity and with holiness I will pass my life and practice my Art (**standards of behaviour**).



# Hippocratic Oath

---

- I will not cut persons labouring under the stone, but will leave this to be done by men who are practitioners of this work (**competency**).
- In whatever house I enter, I will go into them for the benefit of the sick and will abstain from every voluntary act of mischief and corruption; and further from seduction of females (**harassment**), or males, of freemen or slaves (**equal opportunities**).



# Hippocratic Oath

---

- Whatever in connection with my professional practice I see or hear in the life of men that ought not to be spoken of abroad I will not divulge it (**confidentiality**).
- While I continue to keep this Oath unviolated, may it be granted to me to enjoy life respected by all men but should I trespass and violate this Oath may the reverse be my lot (**disciplinary procedures**).



# Police Code of Conduct

---

- Honesty and integrity
- Fairness and impartiality
- Politeness and tolerance
- Use of force and abuse of authority
- Performance of duties
- Lawful orders



# Police Code of Conduct

---

- Confidentiality
- Criminal offences
- Property
- Sobriety
- Appearance
- General conduct



# Nolan Committee Standards in Public Life

---

- Selflessness
  - decisions made in public interest not material benefit of self
- Integrity
  - individuals should not place themselves under financial obligations to those who might influence their performance of public duties.



# Nolan Committee Standards in Public Life

---

- objectivity
  - appointments, decisions made on merit
- accountability
  - submission to external scrutiny
- openness
  - reasons, rationale supporting decisions



# Nolan Committee Standards in Public Life

---

- Honesty
  - duty to declare private interests/resolve potential conflicts of interest
- leadership
  - support/promote principles by leadership and example

The logo of the University of Surrey, featuring a stylized 'S' composed of overlapping yellow, red, and blue squares, with a black crosshair.

# UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

## Statement of Principles

---

- demonstrate integrity, professionalism and self regulation
- inform themselves in relevant subjects and methodologies in their discipline
- observe fairness and equity
- avoid or declare conflicts of interest
- ensure the health and safety of those associated with research
- observe all ethical and legal requirements



# Role of values in social science research

---

- Value free paradigm
  - Positivist tradition in which an independent discoverable reality exists in which knowledge is essentially benign
  - Stimulated quantification in research
  - Methods require reliability/validity checks
  - Search for some objective truth
  - Personal values invisible

# Role of values in social science research



---

- Phenomenologists
  - Knowledge in social science does not exist independently
  - Reality is constructed
  - The process of enquiry itself produced understanding of meaning
  - Methods tend to be qualitative
  - Findings are negotiated
  - Values made explicit



# Distinction between values, moral and ethical issues

---

## **Unethical practice implies:**

- Some dishonourable conduct through which client/research participant is deceived, cheated or harmed
- or conduct likely to bring disrepute to the profession
- or discreditable conduct with respect to colleague, supervisors or trainee



# Distinction.....

---

- Values raise concern about political issues and need not imply blame in the previous sense
  - e.g feminist critiques
  - e.g. institutional racism



# Distinction.....

---

- Moral stance implies personal beliefs  
Do not support research you think questionable  
Do not support colleagues with life style you disapprove of



# Values or value neutrality impinge on:

---

- choice of topic
- choice of methods
- interpretation of findings
- dissemination and use of findings



# Experimental Research

---

- Places researched into an artificial setting  
to manipulate thoughts, feelings, and behaviour
- May involve deception  
e.g. Milgram conformity experiments  
e.g. Zimbardo Stanford University  
prison guard role play



# Survey Research

---

- Privacy

  - avoid intrusive, offensive questions

- Confidentiality

  - data protection legislation

  - any published material

  - participant warned if this is not possible



# Survey Research

---

- Informed consent
  - inform participant of research objective
  - any circumstances that might influence participation
  - answer any of the participants' questions about research
  - proxy consent e.g children learning disabled
  - inducements

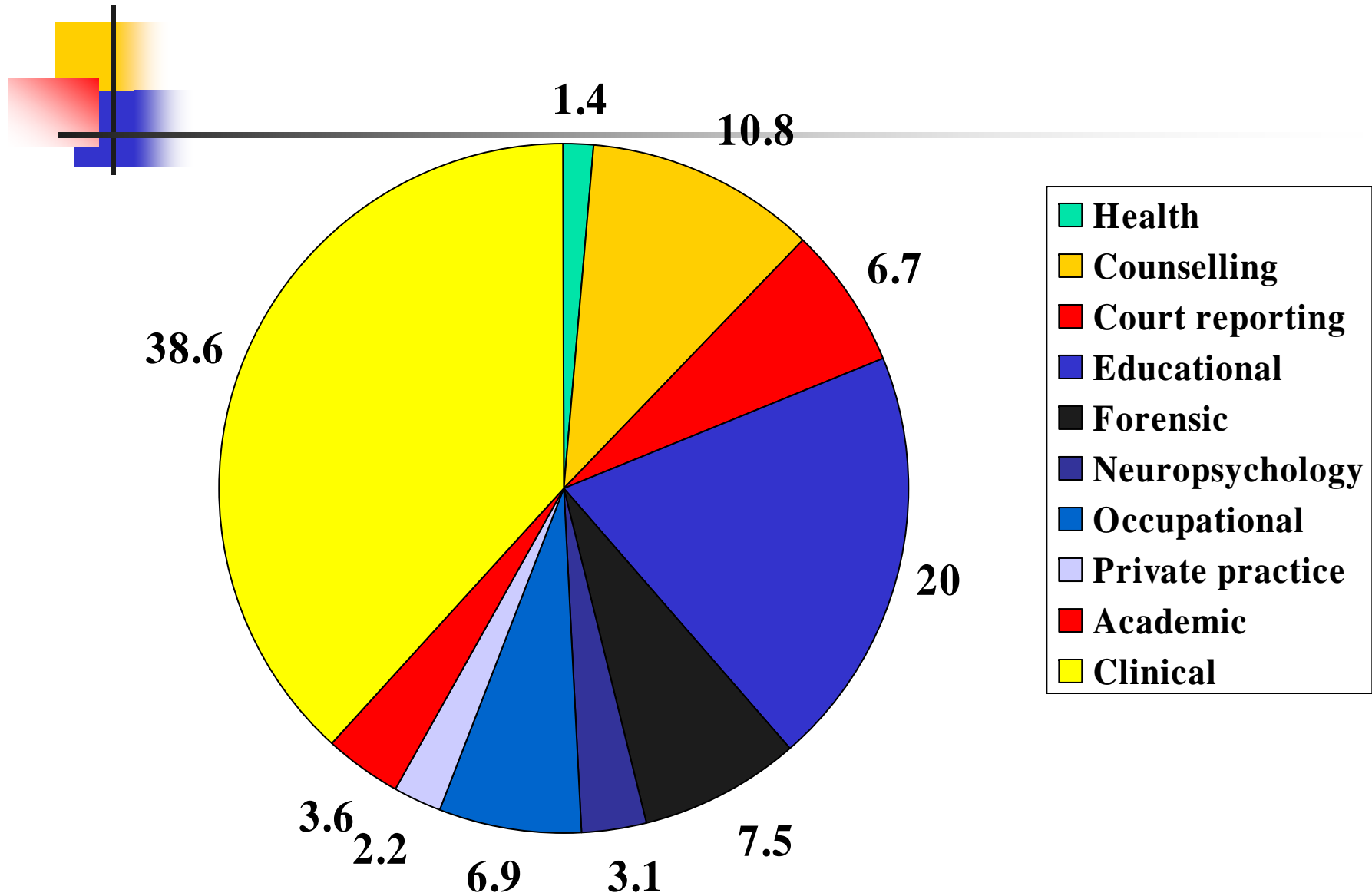


# Observation Research

---

- Privacy and well being of participants
- Informed consent
- Attention to local cultural values

(%) Number of complaints by area of psychology





# Development of ethical codes

## APA 1985 in response to ethical dilemmas reported by members

---

- Privacy and confidentiality
- Teaching, training, supervision, research and publishing
- Forensic activities
- Resolving ethical issue



# Development of ethical codes

## APA 1985 in response to ethical dilemmas reported by members

---

### General Principles

- Competence
- Integrity
- Professional and scientific responsibility
- Respect for people's rights and dignity
- Concern for other's welfare
- Social responsibility



# Development of ethical codes

## APA 1985 in response to ethical dilemmas reported by members

---

### Ethical Standards

- General
- Evaluation, assessment and intervention
- Advertising
- Therapy



# British Psychological Society Code of Conduct and Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Human Beings

---

## Research activity

- confidentiality
- Protection of participants
- Consent

## Conduct

- Probity
- Competence
- Disclosure



## BPS...

---

- Withholding or giving misleading information unacceptable
- if in doubt undertake consultation with individuals who share the social and cultural background of research participants.



## BPS...

---

- Take advice from disinterested colleagues
- determine if alternative procedure could be carried out without jeopardising research objectives
- debrief participants



# Confidentiality

## (Bromley 1981)

---

- Absolute (problematic 3rd parties at risk)
- Limited (access of information to others)
- Contractual (negotiated by a set of rules)
- Discretionary (decided by clinician)

Individual versus collectivist

e.g. client facing the death penalty



# Impartiality

---

Partiality implies potential bias in assessment/testimony

May arise intentionally or unintentionally

## **Reasons for bias:**

- naivety
- eagerness to please the referral source
- pressure from third parties
- prior assumptions about guilt or innocence



# Non sexist language

---

## Why

- Causes irritation
- Linguistic constructions may reveal potential bias
- Distracting

## Types

- designation
- evaluation

# Non sexist language - 'Continued'



---

- **Designation**

## **Use of his/her**

client is best judge of the value of counselling

Man's search for knowledge

People have continually searched for knowledge

Human achievements

Average person

Staff, personnel

Workforce, human resources

# Non sexist language - 'Continued'



---

- **Designation- 'continued.'**

The client's husband [says he ] lets her  
teach part time

Avoid un-parallel usage e.g 10 females  
and 10 men

Use plural form rather than he/she s/he

Use generic police officer, fire fighter,  
parent



# Evaluation

---

- Evaluation
  - Mrs John Smith
  - Ambitious men\ aggressive women
  - Boys chose typically male toys
  - Women's lib
- Avoid ethnic bias



# Sexual Harassment

---

Any unwanted , unwelcome verbal or physical sexual advances, requests for sexual favours or other conduct that:

- Creates an intimidating environment
- Interferes with another's work
- Submission to the conduct made an implicit requirement of the job
- Rejection to such conduct used as bias for employment decisions



# Misconduct arises out of

---

- Misrepresentation of work
- plagiarism
- fabrication of results
- deliberate exploitation of ideas and concepts of others without acknowledgement
- disclosing of information with the intent of gaining advantage for oneself or others
- intentional damage or removal of research related property

# Good Practice



---

- Maintaining professional standards
- recording research data accurately
- documenting results
- report findings accurately
- questioning own findings

# Good Practice



---

- attributing and acknowledging appropriately and honestly the work of others
- securing and storing primary data
- co-operation in research groups
- taking into account the needs of new researchers
- purchasing of equipment in accordance with conditions of grant



# Ethics Permission

---

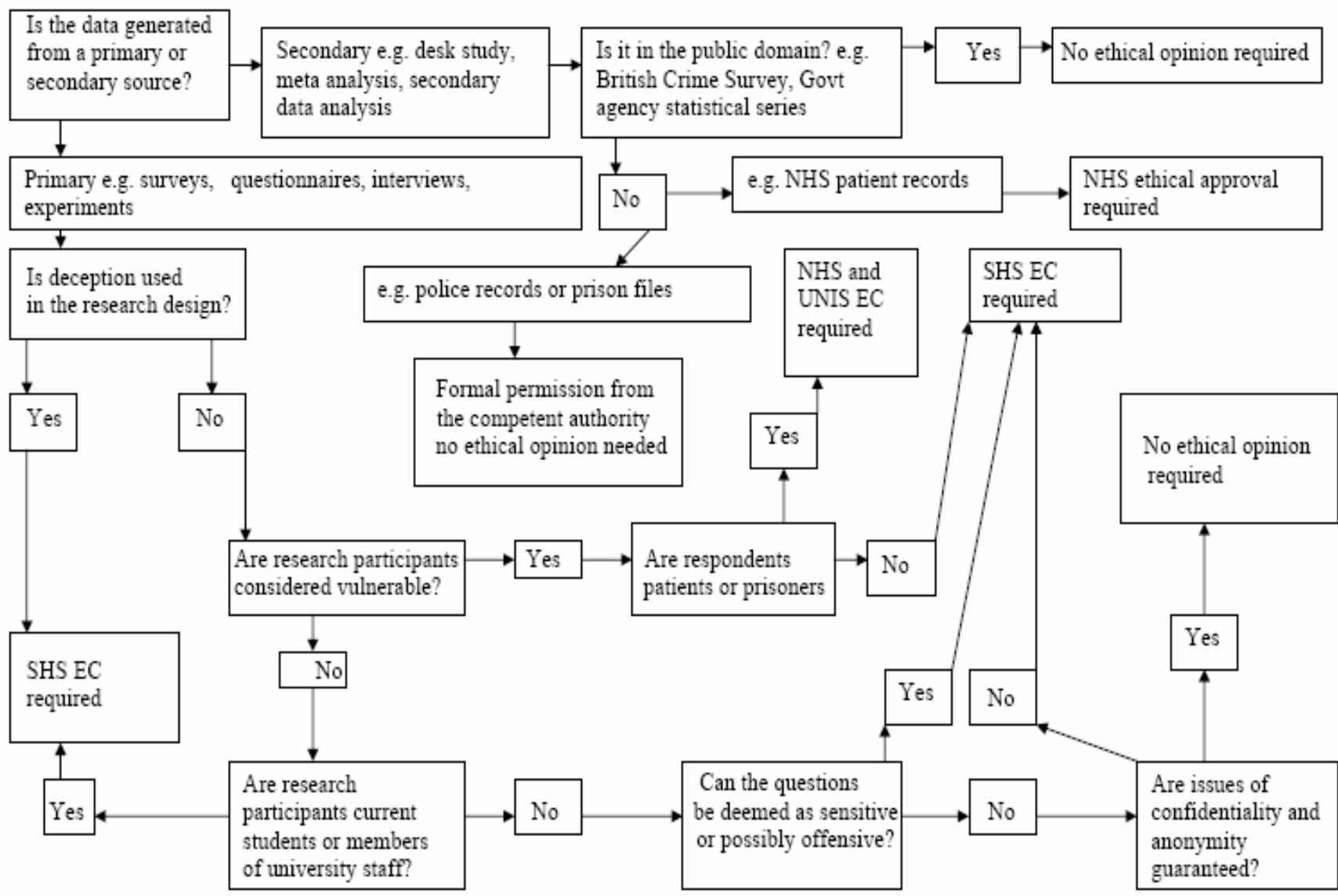
- University
- School
- [www.surrey.ac.uk/SHS/ethics](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/SHS/ethics)



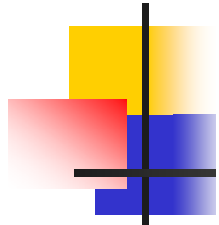
# School ethics site

---

- [Ethics Site Home](#)
- [Briefing](#)
- [Inclusions / Exclusions](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Checklist](#)
- [Documents](#)
- [Useful Links](#)



**Submission To The School of Human Sciences Committee On Ethics  
For The Approval Of Study Protocol Cover Sheet**



1. Title of project:

2. Name(s) of Supervisor

Level

Undergraduate

Masters

Phd

Practitioner Doctorate

Name(s) of Student

Department

3. Signature of Supervisor (where appropriate) to indicate that (s)he has read and approved the protocol submission:

Date:

4. Details of Other Collaborators:

5. Details of Sponsors:

6. Details of payments to Investigators, Departments, Schools or Institutions. Investigators who receive payment as part of an annual consultancy fee should advise the Committee of the situation:

7. Where will the project be carried out ? (e.g. University, hospital, etc.):

8. Source of the participants studied:

9. Details of payments to subjects:



# Ethics assignment

---

- **Scenario one**

A student approaches her personal tutor in some distress because of the death of her father to whom she was very close. She receives considerable help and support from the tutor. She feels drawn to him as he represents something of a replacement father figure. So much so that she accepts an invitation to dinner where the tutor explains that he has become very fond of and attracted to her and that he has given her a lot of special attention because of this attraction. As she feels very grateful to him for helping her through an extremely difficult time, she agrees to start a clandestine affair. The student attends a series of lectures given by the tutor and which carries an assessed assignment. She is unhappy with the rather low mark that she received from him but is satisfied with his explanation that he should not show her any favouritism.

Has a breach occurred, and if yes how?



What is the breach, what Code of Conduct is relevant, how might it have been avoided

---

The relevant Code of Conduct is the Sexual Harassment Code

Oppressive conduct whereby female lecturer embarrassed a male student through explicit sexual references during the course of a lecture

3.1 a,b, c

4.2 d

Greater sensitivity in use of language, greater awareness of the gender ratio of a class and avoidance of the potential discomfort of the minority gender