

## Safeguarding considerations for researchers and research students

As stipulated by the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (Department of Health, 2005) researchers have a responsibility to consider issues relating to the safety and well-being (safeguarding) of participants. However, safeguarding is not only relevant to research involving vulnerable individuals (such as children and young people) or groups (such as people who belong to a marginalised or stigmatised group) as taking part in research can make individuals vulnerable.

It is therefore fundamental to contemplate during the planning stages of a research project if there are any safeguarding issues that may arise and identify strategies to minimise or deal with them.

Some issues that relate to safeguarding that should be considered are presented in the table below along with resources that can provide guidance on how to address these concerns.

Issue	Resources
Power relationships between researchers and participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="683 960 1417 1055">• Boyden, J. &amp; Ennew, J. (1997). <i>Children in focus: A manual for participatory research with children</i>. Stockholm: Save the Children Sweden.</li> <li data-bbox="683 1088 1417 1279">• Department of Health (2005). <i>Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care</i>, London, DoH. <a href="http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4108962">http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4108962</a></li> <li data-bbox="683 1312 1417 1473">• Dobson, C. (2008) <i>Conducting research with people not having the capacity to consent to their participation: a practical guide for researchers</i>. Leicester: British Psychological Society.</li> <li data-bbox="683 1507 1417 1637">• Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). <i>The Framework for Research Ethics</i>. (20 10) <a href="http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Framework_for_Research_Ethics_tcm8-4586.pdf">http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Framework_for_Research_Ethics_tcm8-4586.pdf</a></li> <li data-bbox="683 1671 1417 1765">• Lansdown, G. (2005). <i>The evolving capacities of the child</i>. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Save the Children.</li> <li data-bbox="683 1798 1417 1928">• Lancaster University research ethics website with definitions of vulnerability <a href="http://www.lancs.ac.uk/researchethics/4-2-understandings.html">http://www.lancs.ac.uk/researchethics/4-2-understandings.html</a></li> <li data-bbox="683 1962 1417 2016">• Piffaretti, E. (2007) <i>Capacity to make decisions? Changes in the law – are you prepared?</i> Clinical</li> </ul>

	<p>Discovery, Jun/Jul, pp.20-21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Royal College of Nursing (2011) <i>Informed consent in health and social care research</i>. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: RCN</li> </ul>
Exploring sensitive and emotive topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dickson-Swift, V., James, E.L. &amp; Liamputtong, P. (2008) <i>Undertaking Sensitive Research in the Health and Social Sciences: Managing Boundaries, Emotions and Risks</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</li> <li>McGarry, J. (2010) Exploring the effect of conducting sensitive research. <i>Nurse Researcher</i>. 18(1), pp. 8-14.</li> <li>Watts, J. H. (2008). Emotion, empathy and exit: reflections on doing ethnographic qualitative research on sensitive topics. <i>Medical Sociology Online</i>, 3(2), pp. 3–14.</li> </ul>
Researching in the field and lone working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of Nottingham Guidelines for Safety in Fieldwork <a href="http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/publications/circulars/fieldwk.html">http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/publications/circulars/fieldwk.html</a></li> <li>University of Nottingham Lone Workers Policy <a href="http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/guides.htm#L">http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/guides.htm#L</a></li> <li>Guardian 24™ website <a href="http://www.guardian24.co.uk/Legislation.aspx">http://www.guardian24.co.uk/Legislation.aspx</a></li> </ul>
Maintaining professional boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nursing and Midwifery Council (2008) <i>The code: standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives</i>, London: NMC.</li> <li>Rowling, L. (1999), 'Being in, being out, being with: affect and the role of the qualitative researcher in loss and grief research', <i>Mortality</i>, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp167-181.</li> </ul>
Disclosure of abuse/safeguarding issues during the data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nursing and Midwifery Council <a href="http://www.nmc-uk.org/Nurses-and-midwives/safeguarding">http://www.nmc-uk.org/Nurses-and-midwives/safeguarding</a></li> </ul>

**Author:** Joseph Manning, Research Fellow  
School of Health Sciences  
The University of Nottingham