

TOOL J: Assessing and Minimising Risk in Research

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL: Researchers can use these two sets of questions to assess the likelihood of a range of different risks for research participants as well as devise strategies to help mitigate these risks.

Handy Hint:

It is important to consider when the potential harm might happen. Would it occur:

- o While participating in the research?*
- o Due to exclusion from the research?*
- o When the findings of the research are disseminated?*

Assessing Risk	Examples of Potential Risk of Harm	Likely	Possible	Unlikely
Psychological	Emotional distress, confusion, embarrassment, lower self-esteem, disappointment from false expectations of participant benefits			
Physical	Illness, injury or accident as a consequence of participating in the research			
Social and/or Cultural	Exclusion from social or Cultural group for participating, ostracised by family, community, friends, peers or colleagues			
Economic	Economic disadvantage or deprivation as a consequence of the research			
Legal	Legal penalties due to participation in the survey – and possibly mandatory reporting of criminal activity			

Minimising Risk	Strategy Examples	Steps to Take
Psychological	Referral to local and available counseling or community support and/or debriefing identified by local research partners or participants	
Physical	Ensure safe research environment, consider what damages or reparation would be covered by the research organisation	
Social and/or Cultural	Involve research participants in research design, obtain permissions from appropriate leaders, language use, considered dissemination plan	
Economic	Consider what rewards or incentives might be available, or non-commercial benefits of research	
Legal	Compliance with the law, referral to available public legal services if available	