

# Ethical research and evaluation

The principles of ethical research (ethical principles) consist of four concepts. The four principles are interlinked and together they provide a guiding framework to ensure research activities 'do no harm' to individuals and demonstrate strong ethical practice. They protect the rights of research or evaluation participants.

## 1: Respect for human beings



Respect is an overarching consideration that recognises the intrinsic value of every human being. Respect involves honouring the rights, privacy, dignity, and diversity of those contributing to research.

## 2: Beneficence



Underpinned by the concept of 'do no harm' and involves managing risks to participants and ensuring benefit.

## 3: Research merit and integrity



High quality, well-designed research, conducted by individuals or organisations with sufficient experience and research competence.

## 4: Justice



Related to equity: a fair process for recruitment of research participants; no unfair burden of participation on particular groups; no deliberate exclusion of minority voices and fair distribution of, and access to, the benefits of participation in research.

The principles can be implemented through practical ways as part of research or evaluations:

### Principle 1: Respect for human beings

- Obtain specific, informed voluntary consent
- Ensure safe, secure and culturally appropriate research environment
- Protect privacy and confidentiality of research participants

### Principle 3: Research merit and integrity

- Use appropriate methodology and ensure competent researcher team
- Ensure diverse range of research participants
- Uphold integrity of research practice and findings

### Principle 2: Beneficence

- Ensure value or benefit of research to participants
- Identify early and manage risks
- Ensure research participants are protected from harm

### Principle 4: Justice

- Ensure equity through inclusion and representation of multiple perspectives
- Promote equitable and inclusive participation
- Share and disseminate research to participants

#### Access more resources:

RDI Network: <https://rdinetwork.org.au/effective-ethical-research-evaluation/principles-guidelines-ethical-research-evaluation/>

DFAT: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/development-issues/research>



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