Theme 07: Ethics

**Milgram study on obedience**

Watch the following video considering the ethical principles involved then answer the questions below: <https://youtu.be/fCVlI-_4GZQ> (9:53).

**Activity 1. Ethical Concerns?**

Afterwatchingthe video on the Milgram experiment, fill in the gaps using the words below:

**debrief / protection of participants / right to withdraw / deception**

**Ethical Issues**

* **Issue 1: …………………….** – the participants actually believed they were shocking a real person, and were unaware the learner was a confederate of Milgram's.

However, Milgram argued that “illusion is used when necessary in order to set the stage for the revelation of certain difficult-to-get-at-truths”.

* **Issue 2: …………………….** - Participants were exposed to extremely stressful situations that may have the potential to cause psychological harm. Many of the participants were visibly distressed.

Signs of tension included trembling, sweating, stuttering, laughing nervously, biting lips and digging fingernails into palms of hands. Three participants had uncontrollable seizures, and many pleaded to be allowed to stop the experiment.

* However, Milgram did **……………………….** the participants fully after the experiment and also followed up after a period of time to ensure that they came to no harm.

Milgram debriefed all his participants straight after the experiment and disclosed the true nature of the experiment. Participants were assured that their behaviour was common and Milgram also followed the sample up a year later and found that there were no signs of any

* **Issue 3:……………………**- The BPS states that researchers should make it plain to participants that they are free to withdraw at any time (regardless of payment).

Did Milgram give participants an opportunity to withdraw?

The experimenter gave four verbal prods which essentially discouraged withdrawal from the experiment:

* + 1. Please continue.
    2. The experiment requires that you continue.
    3. It is absolutely essential that you continue.
    4. You have no other choice, you must go on.

**Ethical Issues**

**Activity 2. Fill in the gaps** with the **correct ethical considerations below.**

There are a number of key phrases that describe the system of ethical protections that the contemporary social and medical research establishment have created to try to protect better the rights of their research participants. The principle of ***……………………..*** requires that people not be forced into participating in research. This is especially relevant where researchers had previously relied on 'captive audiences' for their subjects -- prisons, universities, and places like that. Closely related to the notion of voluntary participation is the requirement of ***…………………….*** Essentially, this means that prospective research participants must be fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in research and must give their consent to participate. Ethical standards also require that researchers not put participants in a situation where they might be at ***……………………..*** as a result of their participation. Harm can be defined as both physical and psychological. There are two standards that are applied in order to help protect the privacy of research participants. Almost all research guarantees the participants ***…………………………*** -- they are assured that identifying information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. The stricter standard is the principle of ***……………………………***which essentially means that the participant will remain anonymous throughout the study -- even to the researchers themselves. Clearly, the anonymity standard is a stronger guarantee of privacy, but it is sometimes difficult to accomplish, especially in situations where participants have to be measured at multiple time points (e.g., a pre-post study).

**risk of harm / anonymity / informed consent / confidentiality / voluntary participation**

**Activity 3.** Now think about how you can consider ethical issues in your:

1. Ethics section
2. Participant consent form (attached to your questionnaire)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Module Learning Outcomes Covered | Academic Literacies Covered |
| ML1 | AL4 |
| Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
| Choose an item. | Choose an item. |