Youth Co-research TOOLKIT

TOOLKIT RESOURCES

What is co-research?

CRIS — Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies

YOUNG & RESILIENT RESEARCH CENTRE

cmy — Centre for Multicultural Youth

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

Introduction to the Youth Co-research Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support and guide young people in the early stages of their research journey, with a focus on social research. The toolkit compliments young people's research training and professional development. The aim is to support young people's meaningful role in shaping and conducting research that investigates the big challenges facing society. Building resilient societies should be by and for young people - their involvement as collaborative researchers is critical.

The resources within this toolkit provide information, advice and tools for young people to build their confidence and skills as co-researchers to contribute to real-world impact. It consists of:

≥ **Information** that outlines what it means to be a co-researcher, what it's actually like being on a research team, and the benefits that young people, the research, and the community can experience

≥ **Real experiences** and advice from other young researchers

≥ **'How to'** guides that provide **tips** to manage research challenges and get started in a research career

≥ Introductory **training guides** and activities that introduce the concepts of research ethics, social research methods and research project management

≥ Practical **tools** and **templates**, from managing wellbeing, to planning a research project timeline.

This toolkit has been developed as an outcome of engagement with young people, researchers and partners at the Centre for Multicultural Youth, through **research** at the Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies. The toolkit was identified as one key way to build effective youth participation in research about the issues that impact young people's lives.

The toolkit is a work-in-progress, to be refined, refreshed and added to over time, and supplemented with resources tailored for specific groups of young people and areas of research.

Why would you want to be part of a research team?

This resource outlines what it means to be a co-researcher, what it's actually like being on a research team, and all the benefits you could experience.

Firstly, what is co-research anyway?

There are many ways in which young people can be involved in research, with varying degrees of participation, from participants, consultants, research team members (or 'co-researchers') to research leaders. There is no right or wrong way to participate in research, and the approach that a project takes depends on the research aims, the capacity of the research team members (young people, senior researchers and partners), young people's own priorities, and the context of the research. In reality, research projects often blend multiple approaches. The focus of the resources provided in this Toolkit is to provide guidance and support to young people as co-researchers.

Involving young people as co-researchers, who have shared ownership of the research process and outcomes, is a rights-based approach to research.[1] It meaningfully involves young people to research the problems and inform the solutions that impact their lives. Whilst there is not a single definition of co-research, the process involves young people with trained research skills collaborating with more experienced researchers to produce knowledge. Young co-researchers are fully included and embedded into the project team, beyond the roles of advisors, co-designers, or informants, by being involved across all stages of the research cycle, from design, data collection, analysis, reporting, dissemination, and evaluation. More experienced researchers collaborate with young co-researchers throughout the project cycle and provide support, training, and guidance to young researchers to build their skills and capacities. Their role is often to oversee project management activities and involve young researchers in decision-making along the way.

Young people as consultants
Adults seek young people's views to build knowledge about an issue and may obtain their contributions to the design and direction of the research, then adults conduct the research. Young people may be consulted across multiple stages of the research or at only one stage.

Young people as co-researchers
Young people are involved as collaborative researchers and are a part of the entire project in partnership with adults. Young people take an active part in shaping, planning and implementing the research and there is a shared generation of knowledge.

Youth involvement approaches in research

Young people as participants
In non-participatory approaches, this is a one-way process where adults conduct the research without any engagement with young people, other than as participants.

Young people as research leaders
Young people initiate their own research, develop their own processes and methods and maintain control of the research at all stages. Adults act as facilitators or advisors.

1   Alderson, P. (2008) *Children as researchers.* In: Christensen P and James A (eds) *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices.* 2nd ed. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 276–290.

The principles of co-research are collaborative and youth-centered. In co-research:

≥ Equal value is given to all knowledge (lived experience and by education/profession) and diverse perspectives;

≥ There is shared decision-making power and understanding;

≥ There is mutual learning between young researchers and more experienced researchers;

≥ Building relationships and trust is prioritised;
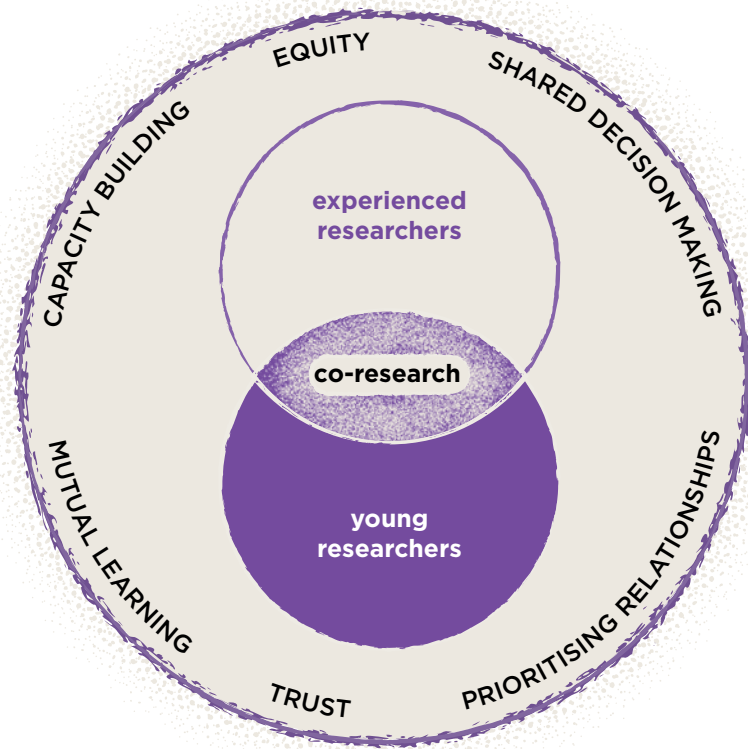
≥ There are opportunities to build capacity and knowledge.[2]

EQUITY

SHARED DECISION MAKING

CAPACITY BUILDING

experienced researchers

co-research

young researchers

MUTUAL LEARNING

PRIORITISING RELATIONSHIPS

TRUST

Photo: Image provided by CMY and photographed by Harjono Djoyobisono.

In the words of young researchers, co-research is...

Having visibility of how my role will make an impact

Working where I can share my unique experience and guide the research

Where I can interpret participant responses through my lived experience

Being involved in the research early, and later in the evaluation - not just when it is convenient

Having the support to take ownership

Being entrusted by senior researchers and given autonomy

Having a stake in the research

2   Hickey G., Brearley S., Coldham T., Denegri S., Green G., Staniszewska S., Tembo D., Torok K., Turner K. (2018) *Guidance on coproducing a research project.* INVOLVE, Southampton.

In sum, the overall goal of co-research with young people is to create spaces and opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships where young people are empowered and their individual capacities and experiences are supported.[3] It is much more than giving young people the opportunity to have their voices heard and their perspectives considered. It is about empowering young people to shape the way knowledge is produced and shared with communities.

Co-research is not an approach that aims for complete shared control between experienced researchers and young people. This is because there are often power imbalances between adults and younger researchers, different levels of research experience, and different levels of time and effort that can be committed to a project by different members. So, practically, the tasks of overall project management are often undertaken by adults. Crucially, the roles and responsibilities of researchers are explored and

defined together. This is so that young researchers can have a say in what their priorities, capacities, and interests are, and where they would like to be involved. It's also okay if these shift over time and over different contexts.

Conceptualisation

- ≥ Create, revise and prioritise research questions
- ≥ Environmental scans and literature reviews
- ≥ Attend project kick-off meetings
- ≥ Develop project descriptions for ethics applications

Project planning

- ≥ Identify the roles and responsibilities you are interested in
- ≥ Schedule meetings for the research team
- ≥ Provide feedback on research timelines
- ≥ Identify suitable locations for research activities
- ≥ Consult on budgeting plans

Design

- ≥ Brainstorm research methods and research instruments
- ≥ Test, review and refine data collection tools e.g. surveys, interview discussion guides, workshop agendas
- ≥ Collaborate to confirm participant sample attributes and recruitment method

Dissemination

- ≥ Draft sections of the report (under the guidance and support of the research team)
- ≥ Co-author journal articles
- ≥ Be involved in planning and executing events e.g. webinars, exhibitions, conference presentations

Analysis

- ≥ Data entry and coding
- ≥ Identify preliminary findings
- ≥ Collaborative analysis sessions with team and/or participants

Data collection

- ≥ Create recruitment materials and social media collateral
- ≥ Assist in communicating with participants e.g. scheduling interview times/locations
- ≥ Conduct fieldwork (with support from research team if necessary)
- ≥ Note-taking and transcription
- ≥ Collect and store data collection materials

Where can you be involved in the research cycle as a co-researcher?

3   Rutgers WPF and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (2013) *Explore toolkit: involving young people as researchers in sexual and reproductive health programmes.* Rutgers WPF and IPPF.

Co-research in action: Case Studies

1 | Children's voices in the time of COVID-19: An inter-generational collaboration co-research study.[4]

Two senior researchers, in collaboration with 12 young people aged 12 to 17, conducted research to explore children and young people's reflections on and perceptions of the COVID-19 outbreak. These 12 young people—from Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mongolia, Romania, and Sierra Leone—were members of World Vision's Young Leaders Advocacy programme which provides skills and tools for young people to conduct their own research. Young co-researchers interviewed participants (other children and young people) over social media and messaging platforms. The young co-researchers felt that their involvement was needed, useful, and rewarding, particularly to help recruit peers to the study in ways that adults did not have access to. Further, the co-researchers expressed that they valued their involvement in the project to use their skills and free time during social isolation for a good cause. They also greatly appreciated the opportunity to connect with other young people during a time when their friendships were restricted.

2 | A community-based participatory research project with youth mental health service users.[5]

This US-based study took a community-based participatory approach to develop a mechanism for young people to take part in designing and conducting mental health research. Their aim was to gain an understanding of the housing support needs of young people living with mental health conditions. Six co-researchers aged 18 to 25 were hired, provided with extensive training and paid at an hourly rate. Co-researchers were involved in research design, recruitment, data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

Involving young co-researchers with lived mental health experiences contributed to a strong rapport with participants, enhancing the types and quality of data gathered. Further, their involvement prompted adult team members to question their assumptions and provided different perspectives which allowed for a deeper interpretation of the data.

3 | Living Life to the Fullest: An arts-informed co-produced research project with disabled young people.[6]

This UK study co-produced disability research by forming the Co-Researcher Collective with six young disabled people. The young people were involved in: research design, recruiting and interviewing participants, planning the project's impact strategy, building relationships with stakeholders, capturing the research process, and communicating the findings through writing blogs, making films, presenting at conferences and research festivals, and co-authoring articles for publication. In recognition of their work, the young co-researchers were given a budget to purchase technology of their choice, invited to become members of the university research centre, and provided certificates and references as evidence of their contributions.

4   Cuevas-Parra, P., & Stephano, M. (2020) *Children's voices in the time of COVID-19: Continued child activism in the face of personal challenges*. World Vision International.
5   Lincoln, A., Borg, R. & Delman, J. (2015) Developing a Community-Based Participatory Research Model to Engage Transition Age Youth Using Mental Health Service in Research. *Family & Community Health*, 38 (1), 87-97.
6   Liddiard, K., Runswick-Cole, K., Goodley, D., Whitney, S., Vogelmann, E. & Watts, M. (2019) "I was Excited by the Idea of a Project that Focuses on those Unasked Questions" Co-Producing Disability Research with Disabled Young People. *Children & Society*, 33, 154-167.

What can I expect as a co-researcher?

Now that you know about what co-research is, what does it look like in reality? What kinds of responsibilities can a young researcher expect to have? What sort of activities would you be involved with? Who can you expect to work with? Here are a few practical tips to help you prepare for what it's like working as a co-researcher.

1 | Every project is different.

Firstly, whilst there will be some similarities, know that every project will be different. You'll most likely be working on different research topics, using different methods, and meeting diverse participants across the projects you work on. Go in with an open mind and expect to be exposed to a wide range of experiences and responsibilities.

2 | Working independently and being self-motivated is key.

As a co-researcher, you can be expected to work autonomously on certain tasks. You might be asked to take full responsibility to lead some activities, such as drafting research materials, data analysis and writing sections of reports. This does not mean that no one is there to help you - people are always ready to help if you ask. But, you need to be comfortable working by yourself, have the confidence to take initiative, make some decisions and solve problems by yourself, and be organised and self-motivated to meet deadlines.

3 | With great research, comes great... admin!

When you first start working on a research project, expect to spend the first couple of days doing admin and paperwork to get your contract sorted. Once you sign your contract, you may need to undertake training modules and quizzes to ensure that your understanding of topics (such as ethics) is up-to-date. Don't forget to regularly check your email and track your hours, so you can get paid!

4 | Expect flexible hours.

As every project is different, expect the hours associated with every project to be different. Ensure you are flexible with your schedule so that you can attend meetings with the team during business hours. Note that you may also need to be available outside business hours, especially during data collection, for example, to conduct interviews. Additionally, the hours you may be required to work may fluctuate from week to week.

5 | You may need to have your own equipment.

For research work, you will be expected to have access to a laptop and a quiet study space. As we continue to work from home and in the office, you may also require access to a webcam, and equipment like audio recorders for interviews.

6 | Remuneration or pay rates will differ.

It is important that as a young researcher you are provided with formal remuneration for your work and contributions. This helps to address power imbalances between senior senior researchers, and fosters a working environment that is grounded in equity and respect. Notably, pay rates for research assistants will be different – it can depend on your employer, your experience, the area of research you are working in, and even on the cost of living in general. You might also be paid for your work via other means such as through reimbursements, honorariums, references, membership to research centres and vouchers. It's important to be aware of activities that you should be remunerated for, which include: contribution to research design (e.g. development of research materials), literature reviews, data collection (e.g. conducting interviews or facilitating focus groups), analysis, report writing, and participant recruitment.

What are the benefits of being a co-researcher?

Being a part of the research team not only has direct benefits for you, but your involvement also benefits the research project and the wider community.

Let's first start with the benefits for you…

1 | **You will contribute to producing knowledge that makes a difference.**

You see the world differently to adults, meaning as co-researchers, you can provide unique insights and shape the research agenda. By bringing in these new perspectives, you can challenge the status quo and inspire informative change in policy and practice about the issues that affect the lives of young people. Plus, you can contribute to developing innovative solutions and improvement of the services you use, while gaining recognition and remuneration for your contributions.

2 | **You will build a wide skill set.**

Through research projects, you will gain experience in planning, listening, discussing, negotiating and problem-solving. These will help you build a wide variety of practical and transferable research skills (for example, applying methods, data analysis, formulating research questions, project management), and soft skills (communication, organisation, time management). Plus, having such a wide skill set can help you to increase your confidence to voice your opinions and improve your decision-making skills.

3 | **You will develop socially and personally.**

As co-researchers, you will have the opportunity to build personal and professional connections with other young people, and researchers. Plus, by working with diverse people and communities, you will develop a heightened awareness of democracy, diversity, social justice and equity. Combining this heightened awareness of social issues with feeling more empowered, more connected, and having a broader skill set, you are better prepared to become involved in advocacy and activism in your communities.

4 | **You will gain valuable work experience.**

As you build more connections with researchers, you will be exposed to many different projects and teams, gaining insight and experience in different research areas. These may then provide you with an opportunity to research an area that you are passionate about, increasing your expertise in the field. There may also be potential opportunities for you to gain professional and academic experiences through co-authoring publications and speaking at conferences. These are valuable experiences to have on your resume to increase your future job prospects and academic outcomes.

5 | **You will feel empowered.**

By being embedded into the research team and contributing to decision-making, you are empowered to be part of research that aims to improve our understanding of issues, and how they are responded to.

What are the benefits to the research project?

1 | **The research problem, questions, and design will more accurately reflect the way young people experience the world.**

It is important to look at issues from different perspectives, as each point of view can generate different kinds of knowledge about an issue, allowing us to gain a more holistic understanding. By working alongside others from diverse backgrounds, ages, and experiences, the whole research process can open up new ways of seeing and responding to problems. This means that even the research question steering the investigation will be more reflective of how young people experience the world.

2 | **The data will be of a higher quality.**

As young researchers, you see the world differently, meaning you can contribute fresh perspectives to data analysis and interpretation. In some cases, this may challenge the assumptions of older researchers and lead to new insights. If the research is focused on young people, younger participants may feel more comfortable to take part and be more likely to provide honest, real responses, improving the reliability of the data.

3 | **Research and development will be more relevant.**

You can identify research issues and questions that senior researchers may have overlooked, and provide new perspectives to better prioritise research questions and topics. Additionally, you may help to capture reliable data involving young people, by developing research methods and tools which are accessible to young participants.

4 | **Research findings will be more accessible.**

You can advise and make decisions as to how and where research is published, so that it is inclusive to more audiences, particularly young people.

What are some benefits to the wider community?

1 | **You will help senior researchers to better engage with young people and the community.**

Working alongside senior researchers increases and develops their understanding of youth issues. This will help them to gain a deeper understanding of young people's concerns and perspectives, and learn new skills in working and communicating with young people.

2 | **You will improve the overall research effectiveness.**

As you build positive relationships with other researchers and rapport with young participants, you are helping to design and deliver research that is built on more authentic and reliable data, ultimately improving the outcomes that communities experience.

3 | **You can inspire new kinds of community action.**

Research conducted with young people helps the wider community understand the nature and possible responses to problems and often inspires new action on issues.

Benefits to the wider community

- ≥ **Better research-community engagement**
- ≥ **Research outputs are more authentic and reliable**
- ≥ **Access to co-produced knowledge prompting community action**

Benefits to the research project

- ≥ **Better quality data**
- ≥ **Fresh, new perspectives and ideas**
- ≥ **Access to diverse participants**
- ≥ **Research topics and questions are relevant to real-time issues**
- ≥ **Research dissemination is more accessible**

Benefits to you

- ≥ **Developed sense of responsibility**
- ≥ **Empowerment**
- ≥ **Contribute to innovative solutions for things that really matter to other young people**
- ≥ **Developed negotiating and problem-solving skills**
- ≥ **Enhanced organisational, planning and team-work skills**
- ≥ **Developed practical research skills**
- ≥ **Build personal and professional connections**
- ≥ **Valuable work experience**
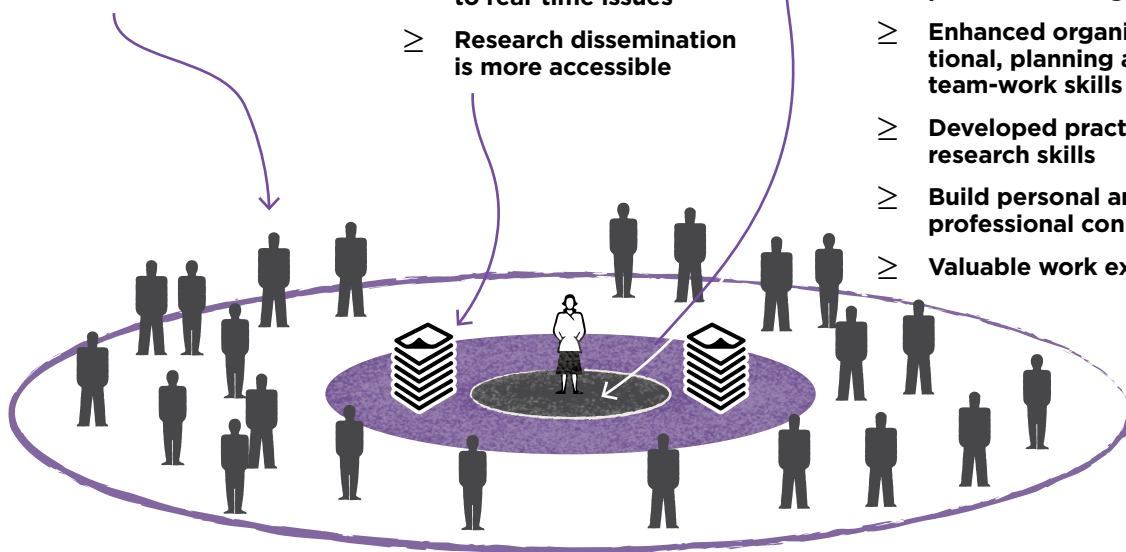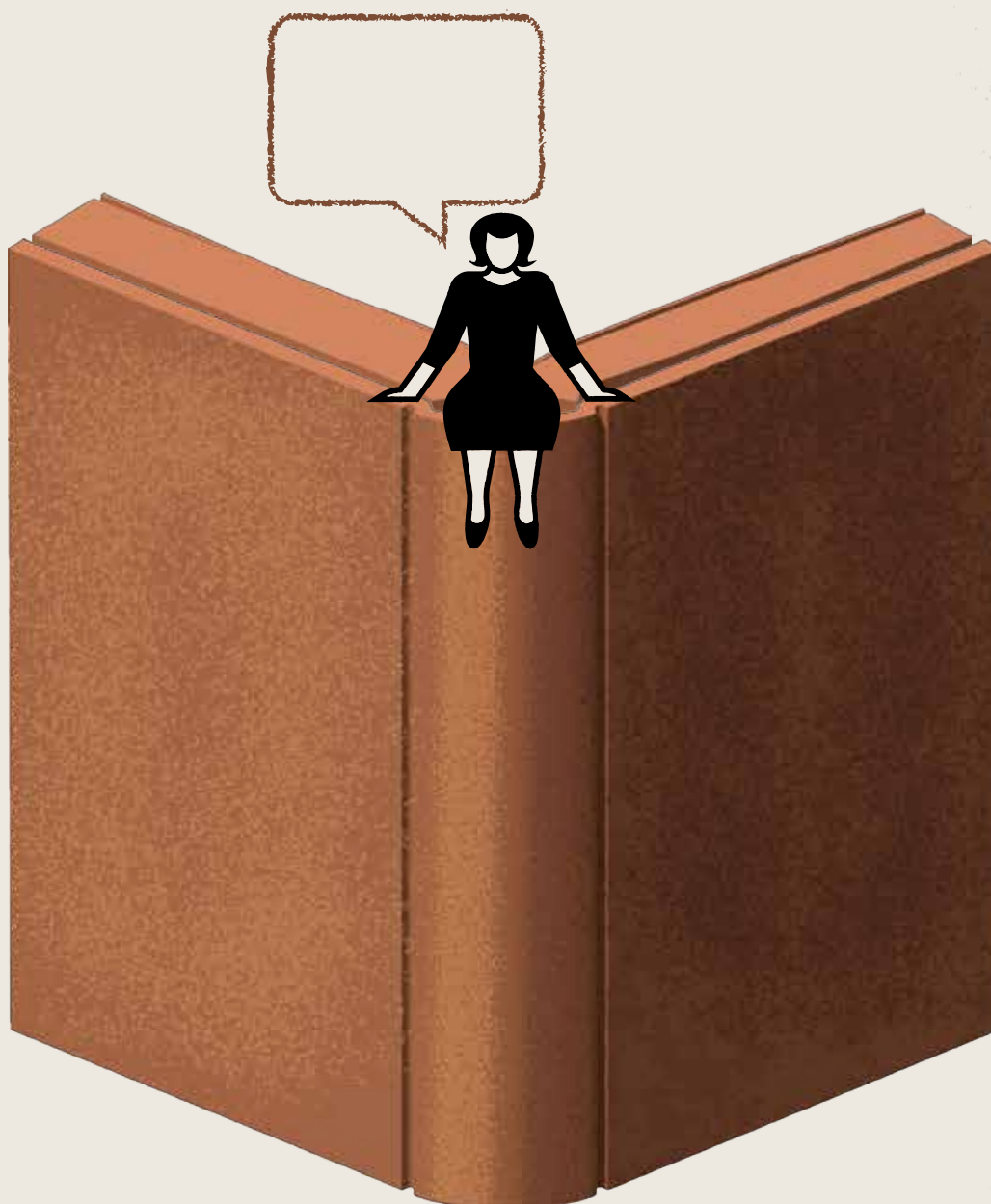
CASE STUDY

Nina's story

Hear from a young researcher: Nina's story

Meet Nina!

A recent graduate of Psychology, Nina is a passionate advocate for student welfare and youth mental health issues. Nina has a large amount of experience in understanding complex issues faced by individuals and communities through her university studies as well as through her role as a youth researcher in a community-based youth research program.

Why did Nina want to be a co-researcher?

Nina had some experience with research through her undergraduate study but had just started her post-graduate degree when she signed up to be a co-researcher, stating that

❝ I thought this would be relevant for my future career path and will also build upon skills that I had developed in my prior university studies. I wanted to gain experience, and build networks. I hadn't done any hands-on type of research before, it had all been quite theoretical. This was an opportunity to move beyond that.

What has Nina's experience been like?

Nina has been able to work on several different projects, from evaluation work to facilitating living lab workshops and gaining employment as a research assistant.

For the evaluation project, Nina got to offer suggestions on whether the document was appropriate for a young audience based on her perspective as a youth researcher and as a youth consumer. This was followed by a similar evaluation project where Nina designed some evaluation tools to assess the work of an organisation and also review the effectiveness of their existing evaluation tools as well.

For the living labs project, Nina worked in a group with other young co-researchers and senior researchers. Together, they co-designed and facilitated workshops to collect data. Thinking about the experience, Nina states

❝ Living labs were a new concept to me but I was glad that I was eased into the projects. It was a staged process and there was a whole aspect of strength in numbers, where if I didn't have the answer - the insights of the rest of the group could help move the project along. But also, I could add to the insights of someone, even if I didn't have the confidence to answer straight off the bat. At every point, we had the support of not just the research team but also the peers in the youth research program, which was really great.

Were there any challenges?

The biggest challenge that Nina had to face was a lack of clear expectations. There were a few times when Nina's expectations of her role did not align with the senior researchers.

❝ I felt like I got dropped into the deep end with the fact that I was required to make a lot of decisions that I didn't expect were going to be my decisions to make. Their expectations of me were really high, but I hadn't expected it to be that high.

Nina emphasises that she liked having that responsibility but it would have been good to know about it beforehand and have clearer expectations before starting.

❝ The thing that helped was having the other young researchers in the youth program to talk to and also reaching out to people on the research team and clarifying the expectations.

There was another instance of miscommunication, and unclear expectations:

❝ I ended up dropping out of that project because the way that it was pitched to us, the time commitment and responsibilities weren't made clear. We had to do tasks like recruit participants, which was something that has always been done for us. We had to also sort out the physical space where we would need to hold the workshop and organise the timing and logistics. All of these tasks meant that the role required a lot more work than I expected,

and I didn't have that time. Having made those expectations clear at the start would have been helpful.

What about any benefits and opportunities?

Nina appreciated the social connections she made, saying

" It was great to be able to meet people like our peer researchers, but also professional researchers, like academics. So, being able to make those professional networks has been really great. Plus, it was a collegial kind of environment to be exposed to research in. I felt very supported, where if I felt something was too much or even in the extreme cases where I just did not have the time to do something, I was supported to take a step back and work through it.

Nina also gained employment as a research assistant through her experience as a youth co-researcher.

" This experience led me to develop new skills which helped me to get employment. I had not designed evaluation tools to the extent that I got to as a co-researcher. I also had not run facilitation workshops related to research before. I knew about co-research theoretically, but it wasn't something I had experienced myself as a young person. So, that was a unique thing.

Another benefit that Nina emphasises is being able to build on her public speaking experience.

" I had mostly been okay with public speaking before, but I hadn't had any experience in the structured type of facilitation, where you establish a space and do the introductory things like welcoming people to the session and setting up an icebreaker and closing the session. Gaining experience and learning about planning and delivering a session, where you are creating a two-way communication process with the participants has been really useful.

What is Nina's advice for other young people?

" My main advice would be to just go for it. Even if you end up biting more than what you can chew, a youth co-research program is an ideal environment to do that because you will have a safety net that you're not necessarily going to have in certain things like employment. So, this is the perfect environment to try new things and to put your hand up for things that you're not even convinced that you're suited for. As long as you have the time to commit, you might surprise yourself and find that you are really good at it. Or, if you do need the extra help, it's not a judgmental environment and there are people that you can reach out to. If things don't work out and you come across some unexpected challenges, people around you will advocate on your behalf if needed or they will teach you the skills to advocate for yourself. So, the first thing is to put your hand

up for everything, because you don't really know what skills you can gain, and this kind of environment comes with a safety net.

What is Nina's advice for senior researchers wanting to engage young co-researchers?

Nina shares two pieces of advice for senior researchers,

" Firstly, be clear. Have as many of the expectations set out beforehand as possible and communicate that in a clear way to young people. This includes logistical and practical things like time commitment or tasks they will be doing. That information should be made available to anyone you want to recruit. Secondly, try to make researchers available for questions, especially when busy periods come up. This is based on what I liked about the people who worked with us - the fact that they made themselves available when things were tricky. There is a lot of value in being supported and not having to work alone, especially when things don't make sense.
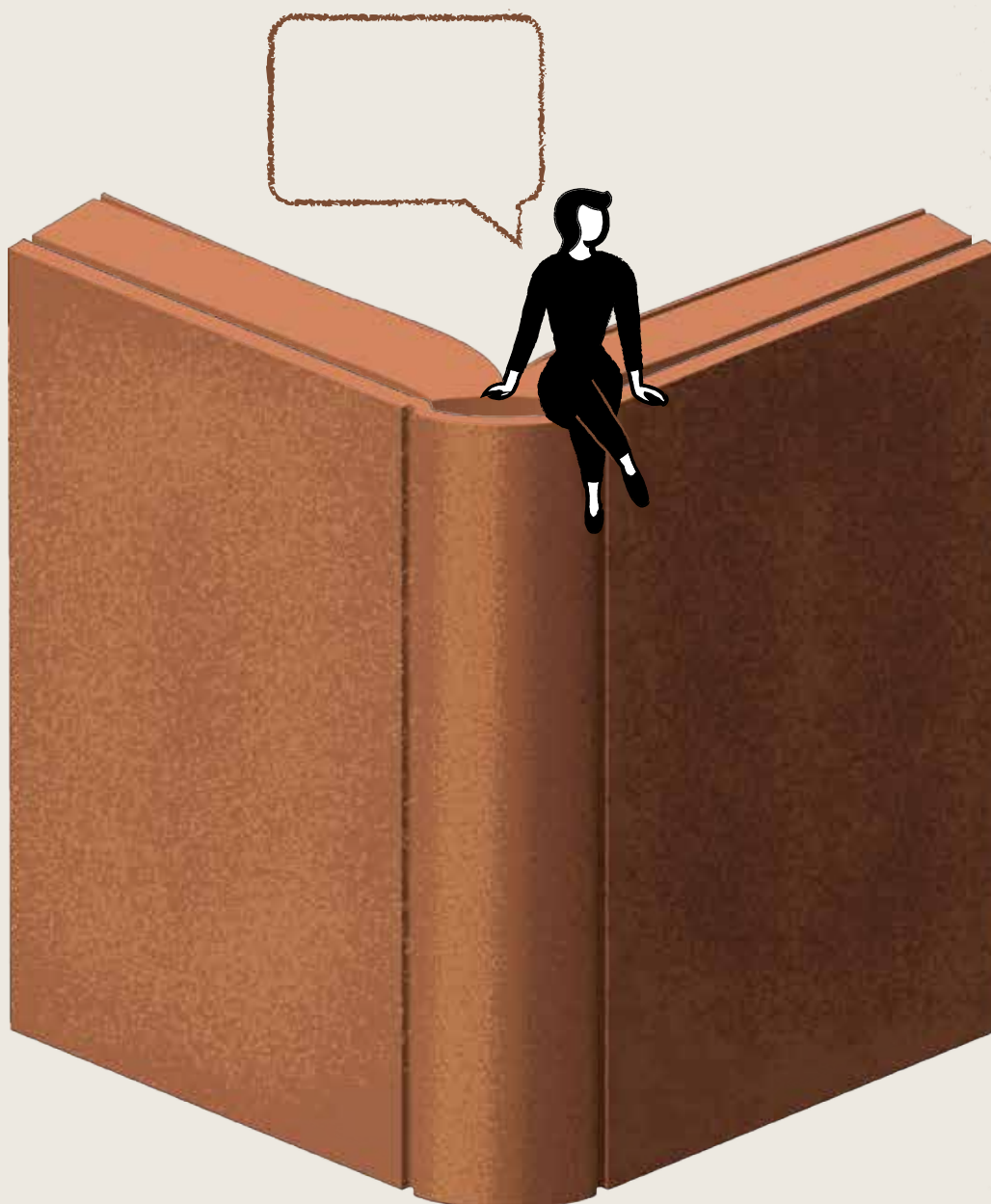
CASE STUDY

Alex's story

Hear from a young researcher: Alex's story

Meet Alex!

Growing up in regional Victoria as part of an increasingly diverse generation of Australians, Alex is passionate about promoting inclusiveness in our leadership structures. Alex believes that it is time that we, as a society, recognise that diversity is no longer some marginal part of our society; it literally constitutes it.

Why did Alex want to be a co-researcher?

Alex has a keen interest in interculturalism and sociology. As such, she was eager to get involved in Explore, a program which develops the research skills of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, to investigate these topics. Alex also wanted to make connections for future career pathways that aren't limited to research, like community-based work.

What has Alex's experience been like?

Alex has been able to work on several projects. One of her first projects involved learning how to facilitate workshops with young people and adults through the Centre of Resilient and Inclusive Societies (CRIS) **Living Labs.** Since then, she has helped the Centre for Multicultural Youth to reform their program evaluation process, and has been involved in the preliminary stages of developing an anti-racism research project at the Australian National University. Alex also serves as a youth advisor with CRIS, attending monthly meetings and giving feedback on their projects.

Were there any challenges?

A challenge that Alex reconciled with for a long time was feeling uncomfortable with the idea of representing the experiences of multicultural young people. She said that,

❝ Although I am of mixed heritage, I grew up in a white Australian family and so feel uncomfortable at the idea of representing the universal values and experiences of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. I am already involved in academia through my PhD and many young people may not be.

She voiced these challenges to the more experienced researchers on her project and they clarified that they were not looking for Alex to represent all young people.

❝ Directly talking to the researchers and being honest with them about how I was feeling, helped me to overcome this discomfort and made me see that I was being accepted for myself.

What about the benefits and opportunities?

Alex emphasised that being involved in research as a young person has been an incredible experience.

❝ I have a greater sense of control and responsibility, especially in the smaller research projects that I have been involved in. It's also given me more insight into the different methods of conducting research.

Alex also loves the first few meetings of a new project where she gets to meet people,

❝ … especially amidst COVID-19, I formed new connections and friendships with other researchers and young people, being able to meet a group of young people who are all interested in research.

Alex has also noticed how much more confident she feels when participating in new research projects. Alex often works on projects for a short term, while other researchers generally have been working on those projects for much longer and have years of experience behind them.

“ I used to feel less confident coming into new projects as I had less familiarity with the projects. But, they [more experienced researchers] want you to be there. So now, I feel much more confident taking up opportunities with people that I would normally think are too far above my level in terms of experience and knowledge. I have found that youth co-researcher roles can provide a meaningful and helpful bridge between youth work and research.

One of Alex's favourite memories was when participants expressed how grateful they were for her anti-racism research.

“ People were so grateful that you are doing research where they have gotten a chance to discuss something that's important to them.

What is Alex's advice for other young people?

Alex says that sometimes young people may question why they are involved in a particular project. However, Alex advises young co-researchers

“ to trust in themselves and not doubt whether their contributions are unique and valid. If someone wants you to be there, don't question it. Just assume that you are contributing.

She also advises to not be afraid to define your own role, stating,

“ There are different hats you can wear, and that's very useful – you can choose which hat to represent. However, at the same time it's important to embrace ambiguity. It's about learning to be flexible and realising you are bringing in an individual experience that may not fit into a pre-decided category. You are much more than just data.

What is Alex's advice for senior researchers wanting to engage young co-researchers?

Alex recommends that researchers help young researchers to develop in areas that they may not feel experienced or confident in.

“ By being approachable, honest and asking young co-researchers what would be helpful can be very effective in helping them to tackle any challenges that arise along the way.

She also encourages researchers to support young people, by

“ regularly checking in with young people and referring them to others that can provide support has made my experience very rewarding.
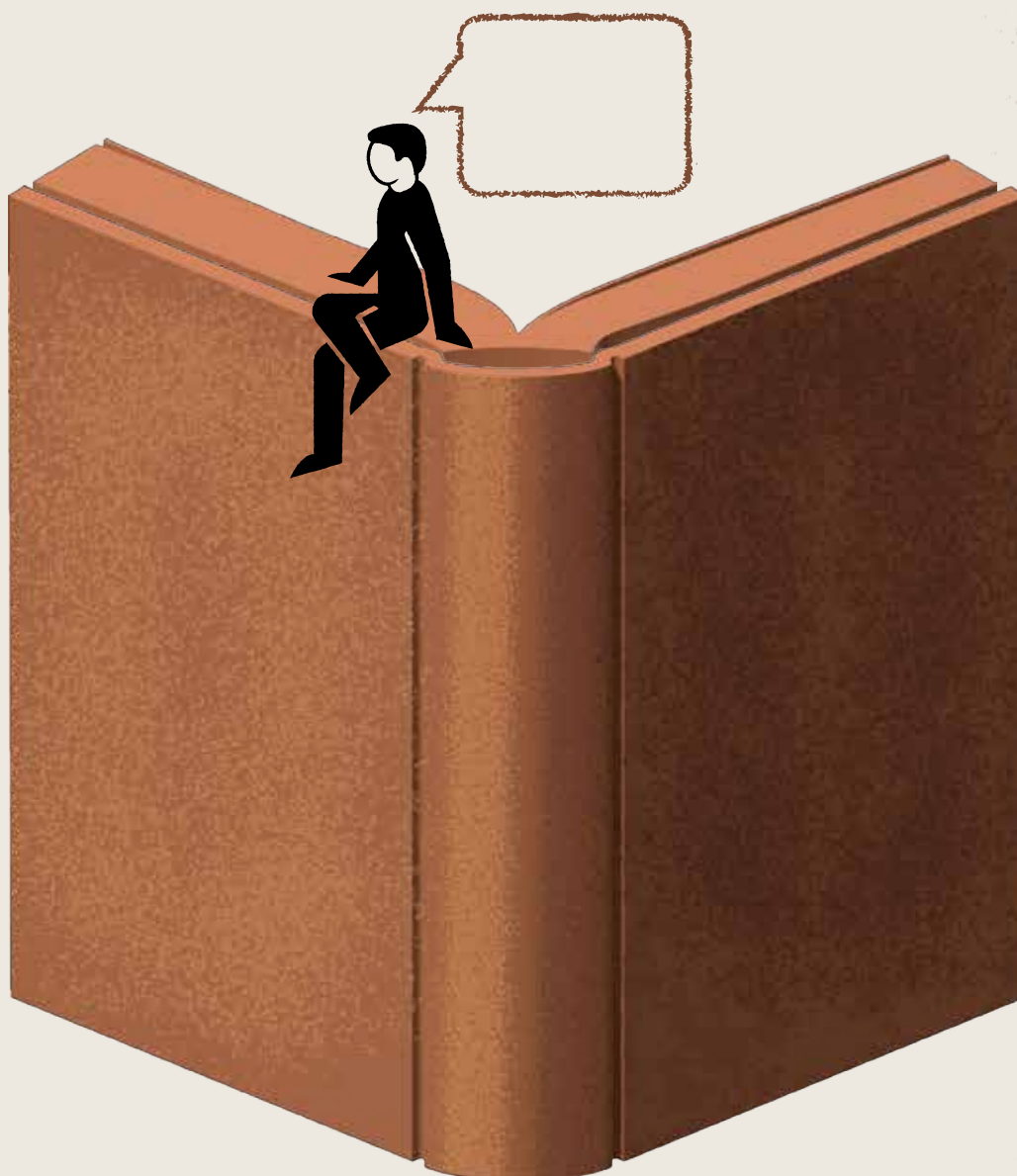
CASE STUDY

Dan's story

Hear from a young researcher: Dan's story

Dan volunteers at the Centre for Multicultural Youth in the Explore program. He is in his second last year of university and considering a career in research or teaching. He is passionate about empowering young people in engaging with social issues. Dan's research interests relate to geography, health and education, particularly in the context of migrant and refugee communities.

Why did Dan want to be a co-researcher?

Dan was interested in the human aspects of research as well as the scientific elements of it.

❝ Initially when I got into youth research, I thought it would be based around the science aspects of research, but then I realised there are strong human aspects to it. That's why I sort of got into human research at Deakin, because I realised that it can build on my professional skills in terms of doing things like literature reviews. It can also build on my personal skills, like talking to people in the community.

He also talked a bit about his motives for joining Explore, a program that allows for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to have direct input into research that impacts their lives.

❝ In the Explore program, I got to meet other young people and network with researchers. I felt more inclined to join the program because there were a lot of multicultural young people. As a young person of colour, your voices are not often heard. Explore gives you the ability to speak out."

What has Dan's experience been like?

Some of the research projects Dan has worked on included the **Objects for Everyday Resilience** project, through CRIS.

❝ In that project, you talk about the importance of objects in building mental health and resilience for everyday life, especially during lockdown. We have started planning the exhibition and creating flyers. I've also been involved in a project relating to technology and how young people of colour navigate it for their daily lives. I've done a couple of interviews for this project so it's just getting started. The researchers are pretty flexible since I'm still pretty new to research.

Dan has found meeting researchers early on in the research process helpful.

❝ The good thing is that we've met the researchers pretty early on in the year. I've felt like there is already some sort of rapport and we understand the dynamics, the roles of youth researchers. However, being a young co-researcher can also have its challenges. Sometimes I have questions like: Am I doing enough for this project? How much time should I commit to this project?

Were there any challenges?

Dan spoke about the impacts of lockdown, time commitments, and being unsure about the possible challenges in research.

❝ I think not being able to meet the researchers in person and just doing things online due to the impacts of lockdown. Also just figuring out what I want. I was doing 4 research projects at one point. It's just about managing your time regardless of the opportunities out there.

Dan thought that having more

professional development opportunities, a clearer timeline, and possibilities for peer-to-peer mentoring would have helped him in his journey.

What about the benefits and opportunities?

Dan appreciated how he was able to gain many soft skills as well as technical skills during the research process.

" Being involved in research does not only build your skills in science, but there are also social components that come with it. In Explore, we've been able to facilitate workshops, talk to people and communities while building our leadership capacities. A highlight for me was the youth summit. I felt like I was able to make a difference just interacting with the communities, getting feedback from them, and influencing the research directions.

He discussed the importance of gaining communication skills from research and how it has helped him in getting other work opportunities.

" These experiences look really good in your resume because it is so unique - doing research, facilitating workshops, working with multicultural communities. It's also the reason why I got two of my jobs. A lot of unexpected opportunities came even with no work experience.

" I think one of the biggest positives of being a youth co-researcher is just being able to get your foot in the door. A lot of the time, we have to network a lot to get into research. If you think about the structural barriers for young people of colour, it's especially difficult for them to get into research because it is

not dominated by people of colour. If you are young and you get into research early, that just gives you a good start for your later professional experiences.

What is Dan's advice for other young people?

Dan's advice for young people who are interested in becoming co-researcher's is knowing how to balance their commitments and opportunities effectively.

" Consider your time and opportunities at the same time. Possibly write down what you want to gain from research and why you want to engage in it. Consider your options, but don't be afraid to say no.

What is Dan's advice for senior researchers wanting to engage young co-researchers?

" Just listen and communicate. Many young people come into research projects without having much ideas. Let the youth researchers know they're still very important to the projects, including their views and opinions. Actively give out opportunities for youth researchers to upskill.

Dan discussed some of the insights he took away from both the researchers and young people.

" Researchers know how to talk to people and understand some of the most complex social issues. If you're going to help young people into research, you should get them into human research first because that's where the skills lie. Young people's lived experiences are so important to research projects, regardless of whether they have a PhD or not.

Finally, Dan emphasised that

researchers should engage with co-researchers to develop young people's skills and improve connections between researchers and communities.

" Young people have many community networks that may be useful for research. By talking to someone who is both a researcher and a young person of colour, the young person can act as a bridge between the research and the communities. It is also a good way to train young people professionally. Instead of creating more time burdens to find researchers or PhD students to hire, you already have this group of young people who are trained and competent for research.

How to manage the challenges of being a young researcher

How to manage the challenges of being a young researcher

There are so many benefits to being a young researcher! You have a wealth of knowledge and skills to bring to the world of research and gain many wonderful new experiences. But, along with all the exciting new opportunities of being a young researcher, there may also be challenges along the way. It can be daunting navigating the workplace as a young researcher, particularly when other researchers in your team are older than you and have more experience in the field. Recognising the potential challenges that this can present, this guide provides advice on how you can navigate common workplace challenges and feel more confident and empowered in your research role.

Communication issues and unclear responsibilities

It is not uncommon for miscommunications to arise between researchers. It might simply be that your supervisor has not been clear enough in setting out the parameters of a research task, or that they have been vague about how your contributions are to be used. This might leave you feeling unsure about the next step, or confused about what you should be working on. Nevertheless, it is imperative that these communication barriers are addressed promptly to prevent it from negatively impacting on your workplace experience and on your relationships with your co-workers.

Some things you can try to prevent miscommunications include:

> **Inform your team/ supervisor of your preferred communication channels.** You could say something along the lines of *"The best way for you to reach me is via... [email, Slack, Discord, mobile, Zoom, etc.]".* Check if these channels work well with the people you're working with, too.

> **Get into the routine of checking your emails regularly.**

> **Be upfront about your availability.** It is important that you let your supervisor/ team know what hours and days you can work (you can schedule these in a shared calendar, and include them on your email signature).

> **Be transparent with the research team, and ask for support or guidance when you need it.** Be open about anything that you are unsure about and flag any communication challenges that arise along the way.

Trust

Trust plays an important role in the efficient functioning of a research team. A research project will require roles to be delegated to each researcher, and your team will be relying on you to fulfill your contribution within a specified timeline. Building trust, like anything, can take some time.

Some things you can try to build trust amongst other researchers include:

> **Get to know your supervisor/research team better.** Building rapport will go a long way to building trust and improving your ability to work collaboratively.

> A good starting point is to **engage in casual conversations** with your colleagues. You could ask them about what they like, what their preferred research area is, their hobbies, etc.

> Make sure that you **embrace opportunities to participate in team-bonding activities and icebreakers**, whether they be online or face-to-face.

> **Regularly deliver on your commitments to demonstrate your reliability**.

> **Be honest and transparent.** This includes when you think you may not be able to finish a task on time. Letting your supervisor know this in advance (rather than waiting until the due date of a task) will make it easier to figure out ways to provide extra support and finish the task.

Managing competing commitments

Being fully immersed in a project team can be challenging if you've got to juggle other personal, work, and study commitments. You might find yourself overcommitting to your research role and falling behind on your other commitments. Over time, this can result in burnout, with some common signs being:

> Low energy and motivation;

> Decreased work satisfaction;

> Procrastination;

> Disengagement with activities you previously enjoyed/valued; and

> Feelings of irritability and exhaustion.

In order to avoid this, it is important that you are able manage your competing commitments effectively. Some tips to help prevent yourself from feeling overburdened with your work include:

> **Let your supervisor know how you are feeling.** If you are struggling to manage your workload or are finding it difficult to meet deadlines due to other commitments, and if you feel comfortable to do so, you should aim to communicate this to them. Your supervisor can then look into re-delegating some of your workload to other team members.

> **Create a structured timetable to ensure that you are allocating enough time for other commitments.** This will also help you keep track of deadlines, allowing you to prioritise the most urgent tasks. To-do lists are also great for this. (There are recommended apps such as **Todoist and Evernote** in the **'Recommended Resources'** section of this toolkit that might be helpful!)

> **Take breaks from work.** Working long, consecutive hours without having breaks could be a large part of why you might be feeling overwhelmed. Try to take a 5-10 minute break after working for an hour to give yourself time to stretch, grab a snack or go outside.

> **Seek advice from colleagues.** Don't be afraid to ask questions! Asking your colleagues questions about how to perform better at your job can help you develop professional relationships, while also providing you with valuable insight into ways you can improve.

> **Avoid the tendency to take on too much.** You should always carefully assess your capabilities and capacities before agreeing to take on additional work and refrain from saying 'yes' to everything.

Keep in mind that many of the challenges identified here are things that other research team members or even the lead investigator/your supervisor might also be experiencing! So if you're facing these challenges, you're probably not alone and you don't need to struggle by yourself. If things aren't working out, it's probably a challenge you need to address as a team. Plus, it's good to develop strategies to deal with these things early in your research journey - habits can form that you carry forward into your career!

Power imbalances

As you undertake co-research, it will often be the case that you will be working under the supervision and instruction of a senior researcher. However, this doesn't mean that you can't be involved in decision-making and influencing the direction of the research project. In fact, it is important that co-research reflects a democratic process that enables for your voice and insights to be fully heard. Whilst the responsibility of addressing power imbalances is definitely not all on you, here's some things to keep in mind.

> **Recognise the unique perspectives you bring to the team! As a young person, you can bring some valuable insights to research design.** Draw on your own experiences when you communicate your thoughts and opinions to your team. In doing so, you could potentially identify issues that were previously overlooked by senior researchers.

> **Make yourself heard.** Ensure that you are speaking up in meetings and inputting your ideas into the discussion. More often than not, senior researchers will be very appreciative of any fresh ideas you bring.

> **Ask for opportunities.** Sometimes, you might need to help senior researchers to create the space so that you can contribute to decision-making. This could be through asking for the opportunity to give feedback for project proposals and being involved in planning meetings.

> **Acknowledge power differences.** As a team, acknowledge any challenges that may impact your ability to engage in co-research, and brainstorm strategies to work through these together.

TOOLKIT RESOURCES

How to develop a career plan in research

CRIS
Centre for Resilient
and Inclusive Societies

YOUNG &
RESILIENT
RESEARCH
CENTRE

cmy
Centre for
Multicultural Youth

DEAKIN
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How to develop a career plan in research

Thinking about a career in research? Here are some tips to help you on your way.

1 | Identify what you are passionate about

It's hard to get into research without knowing what research areas intrigue you. You're not expected to know right away. Most likely, you are still discovering and developing your interests, and that's okay. To figure out what your interests are, reflect on these questions:

≥ What questions/problems am I most interested in exploring and/or solving?

≥ What (if any) research topics relate to my hobbies, personal interests, or extracurricular activities?

≥ What research topics relate to the career field or sector I want to end up in? What interests me in that field of work?

For example, you may feel concerned about climate change and want to explore different solutions to enhance environmental sustainability. You may feel drawn towards a public health issue, such as COVID-19, and want to get into health research. Research drives everything we do, from policy decisions to design practices, so there are many options to explore where you could research the things you're passionate about.

2 | Think about your pathways

Education is one of the key pathways for you to explore your interests, develop your skills and experiences, and connect with peers, lecturers and researchers who work in your area of interest. Your study, at school and university, can be a place where you can kick off developing your research skills, through critical thinking, working with data, reading academic papers, preparing presentations, and report writing. If you are at university and want to be more engaged with research, consider doing your Honours year, as it can provide you with more research experience, training opportunities, and networks. You can also do your PhD or Masters to get more exposure in research. However, you definitely do not need to continue studying to become a researcher. There are many different pathways to research, like being a part of youth research bodies like the **WH&Y Commission**, or through training programmes like **Explore**.

3 | Make connections

Begin to develop networks of people that could connect you with research work. Find out who the key people in your field are and who they work with. This can be academics, researchers, lecturers, teachers, careers advisors, other students, and youth or research organisations. You can connect to these people on social media sites such as LinkedIn or Twitter, and keep an eye out for networking events, webinars and workshops relevant to your research area of interest. See if your university, school or favorite organisation has a research department that you're interested in. Express your interest by emailing researchers at your university, at research centres or non-for-profit organisations, to volunteer and build your work experience.

4 | Explore the possibilites

When looking for research work, be aware of all the relevant job opportunities, including outside of academia. Some of these roles can be user experience (UX) researchers, design researchers, evaluation officers, project coordinators, market researchers, consultants and specialists.
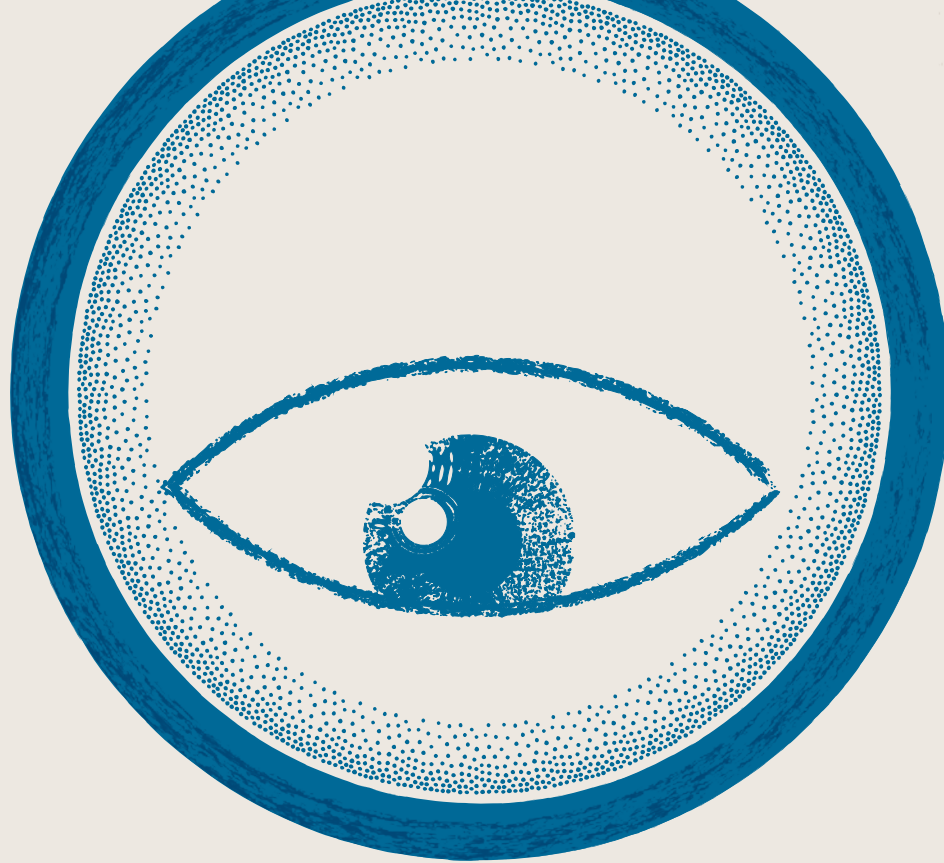
TRAINING MATERIALS

Youth
Co-research
TOOLKIT

Training Guide: Introduction to Social Research

CRIS
Centre for Resilient
and Inclusive Societies

YOUNG &
RESILIENT
RESEARCH
CENTRE

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What is Social Research?

This guide provides an introduction to social research and defines key terms. It provides an overview of the research process, different types of social research, and the benefits and risks associated with research.

What is research?

Research is a careful and detailed study of a specific problem or issue. To begin researching, we often start with turning a problem or issue into a question, with the aim of conducting research to answer that question.

This can be done by conducting new research or analysing and synthesising previous research findings (e.g. through systematic reviews). Research can be defined as

❝ the creation of new knowledge and/or using existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings."

(**Australian Research Council, 2015:3**).

Research is a continuous cycle of investigation and often involves going back and forth between steps. The process usually involves the following stages:

What is the research process?

1 Conceptualisation
This is where the research topic and problem are defined.

2 Design
The research questions, methods, and data collection tools are designed and the participant sample is decided.

3 Planning
Resources, budgeting, and timelines are developed.

4 Data collection
Data is collected through chosen methods, e.g. interviews, surveys, and observations.

5 Analysis
Data is interpreted and examined to find meaning.

6 Reporting
The findings are written up and discussed.

7 Dissemination
The findings of the research are shared, e.g. through journal articles, papers, and reports.

8 Evaluation
This is where the impact of the research is evaluated, if necessary.

9 Repeat & future research

What types of research are there?

Research is very broad and there are many different types of research that use different methods to answer the research questions.

Research can be about anything, from finding effective treatments for cancer, to exploring the impact of the pandemic on education and employment for young people. There are many different approaches to research, from observing events taking place, to manipulating specific variables and measuring their impact. When different services, policies or programs are introduced in practice, research may be used to understand what difference they have made to the community or issues being addressed.

The type of data collected can be qualitative (e.g. data from focus groups and interviews, and also drawings and photos) and quantitative (e.g. responses to questions in a survey, that can be analysed numerically).

Social research aims to learn more about people and societies by studying social trends, dynamics, the behaviours and practices of people and how meaning is created in individuals, groups and societies. It is a broad category that can include many fields such as psychology, sociology, human geography, and anthropology. Social research can be quantitative, qualitative and use participatory and digital methods.

Quantitative

Numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics

Digital

Research using digital technology such as computers, smartphones apps, digital platforms such as social media and software

Qualitative

Scientific method of inquiry and observation

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

An approach to research in communities that emphasises participation and action. It seeks to understand the world by trying to change it, collaboratively and following reflection

Research Methods

There are many traditional - and innovative - methods that can be used to uncover insights to address social research questions. Many of these methods can harness digital technology to collect data.

≥ **Surveys:** Surveys involve asking the same questions to a large number of participants to produce numerical data and qualitative data from open-ended responses. Surveys can be used to validate insights from focus groups or interviews, or as a starting point to then deep-dive into key themes through qualitative methods.

≥ **Ethnography:** This involves detailed observation of people in their natural environments, with the idea that we can better understand people when we can observe what they do.

≥ **Focus groups:** A research technique used to collect data through group interaction. The group typically comprises of a small number of people who discuss a given topic.

≥ **Interviews:** An in-depth, discovery-orientated method to obtain detailed information about a topic from a partici-pant. The interviewer will aim to explore the respondent's point of view, experiences, feelings and perspectives.

≥ **Participatory or co-design workshops:** Researchers guide a group of participants through a design process and leverage their expertise on a topic. Workshops use creative, participatory activ-ities, such as mind-mapping and journey mapping, to explore experiences and discover opportunities.

Check out more about participatory design methods in **this guide** by the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre. See more creative methods by MakeTools, **here.**

≥ **Living Labs:** Workshops with groups of participants simulate a real-life activity that brings together different groups of people to explore a problem and its possible solutions. See more about this method in use at the **Young and Resilient Research Centre here.**

≥ **Arts-based research:** Participants may be asked to represent their ideas and insights through creative expression, e.g., painting, photography, creative writing, and drawing.

≥ **Online research forums or communities:** A group of participants contribute their ideas and responses to questions via an online forum which spans over a set period of time. Participants can respond to each other and build upon responses.

≥ **Diary studies:** Participants individually respond to a series of questions each day over a set period of time. This method provides insights into an individual's everyday life, behaviours, thoughts, feelings and routine.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES:

Use **these Quizlet flash-cards** to explore different social research methods and case studies of these methods in action.

Download **this Miro board** for interactive worksheets exploring research methods.

Why is research important?

Research helps us to better understand the world around us. Without research, we would be forced to solely rely on intuition, other people's authority, and some luck. Below are just a few of the reasons that highlight the importance of research.

≥ **Research helps us to solve important problems.**
The goal of research is to broaden our understanding. Research allows us to collect information and knowledge efficiently and logically, including expanding on any prior knowledge we have. This means we are better equipped to understand problems and create logical and innovative solutions.

≥ **Research provides us with the latest information.**
Research allows us to seek out the most up-to-date facts. There is always new knowledge and discoveries to be made to improve the current way we do things. Staying updated keeps us from falling behind and providing inaccurate or incomplete information that can lead to poor decision making. Research creates new opportunities for learning and progress.

≥ **Research gives us the evidence to advocate for social change.**
People are more likely to take us seriously when they can tell we are well informed. Conducting research provides a solid foundation on which we can build ideas and opinions. It allows us to more confidently build the evidence-base to enhance our understanding and therefore, advocate effectively for social change.

≥ **Research allows us to share valuable information with each other.**
Research can be used to help raise awareness of important issues, such as climate change. Without hard facts, it can be very difficult to prove that climate change is getting worse. However, people need to have access to information and evidence, especially on issues that affect them. Plus, research can involve going beyond abstracted data to sharing real-life stories and our experiences with one another.

What are the risks of research?

Although research has many important benefits, there are some risks that we need to be aware of when conducting research.

≥ **Research can reproduce privilege.**
The pathway to becoming a researcher often means going to university and is therefore dominated by privileged groups who can afford to spend many years in higher education. This formal pathway to becoming a researcher often excludes those who have not gained higher tertiary education. This has a domino effect on the research that is conducted, potentially skewing research topics to investigate issues that affect more privileged communities.

≥ **Research with marginalised groups is often under-resourced**.
As funding is a scarce resource, research around issues affecting marginalised groups is often under-resourced. This means that some issues may remain underrepresented and the research that is undertaken is often low in quality due to time and money constraints.

≥ **Research may be inaccessible or not adopted in practice.**
Reports that are overly technical, lengthy and use complex, academic language may make the findings inaccessible for many audiences, no matter how important they might be. This may result in research evidence and recommendations sitting on a shelf, rather than contributing to the evidence-base and influencing change.

≥ **Industry sponsors can influence the research findings**.
Over the last two decades, industry funding for research has increased while government and non-for-profit funding has decreased. This can mean that industry sponsors may influence the research agenda, design, and conduct of research, as well as partial publication of research, where only the findings favourable to the funders are published.

≥ **Misrepresentation of findings.**
Traditional media (e.g. news stations) and non-traditional media platforms (e.g. social media) have become important and rapid sources of information. However, the way research is interpreted and shared can have unintended negative consequences. For example, media reporting can misrepresent research findings by either inaccurately over-emphasising or over-simplifying conclusions for the general public. This is commonly seen in "click-bait" headlines. For example, the **Huffington Post** incorrectly equated the health benefits of red wine to an hour at the gym.
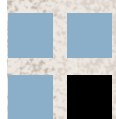
TRAINING MATERIALS

Training Guide: Introduction to Ethics in Social Research

CRIS
Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies

YRC
YOUNG & RESILIENT RESEARCH CENTRE

cmy
Centre for Multicultural Youth

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

What are Research Ethics and why are they important?

Research Ethics govern the way in which researchers carry out their work, with the overarching aim to preserve the rights, dignity, safety and welfare of both participants and researchers. Research Ethics mean that the entire research process is carried out with integrity, transparency, and honesty, and that potential risks are accounted for and minimised as much as possible. Whilst Research Ethics is essentially about 'doing the right thing', there are lots of complexities, considerations, and guidelines to be aware of. Research ethics is a live area of debate, and new ethical dilemmas often arise as our ways of working, and society's morals and standards change.

❝ Ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues. Ethics also involves the study and development of our own ethical standards via continual examination of our moral beliefs and conduct.[1]

National Research Guidelines

Historically, some research involving human subjects has been highly unethical, disregarding human rights and set in racist, ageist and classist agendas.

Over time, research ethics frameworks and codes have been shaped by the need to protect people from exploitation and harm. There are overarching global standards, like the <u>UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights</u>, but the codes and guidelines for governing human research can vary a lot around the world. In Australia, The <u>National Statement</u> <u>on Ethical Conduct in Human Research</u> (2007) ('National Statement') sets national standards for conducting human research. It is intended for use by:

> any researcher based in Australia who is conducting research with human partici-pants anywhere in the world;

> any member of an ethical review body reviewing that research;

> those involved in research governance; and,

> potential research participants.

The purpose of the National Statement is to promote ethically good human research, ensuring that participants be given respect and protection from harm. It also involves the fostering of research that is of benefit to the community.

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1   Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D., & Fitzgerald, R. (2013). *Ethical Research Involving Children.* UNICEF Office of Research.

Ethical principles in research

Integrity

In respecting the rights of participants and researchers, it is important that research is always conducted with integrity and honesty. Researchers need to ensure that the process is transparent and that participants are fully aware of what they will be asked to do and how their contributions will be used. It is important that researchers have the experience, qualifications and competence to enable the research to be carried out appropriately and ethically.

Justice

Research that is ethical is fair and just. Fairness should be considered in all aspects of the research design, including in recruitment of participants, burdens on participants, accurate reporting of results, and accessible reporting.

Beneficence

Researchers are responsible for designing the research to minimise the risks of harm, stress or discomfort to participants, and maximising any benefits. Benefits may be experienced by participants and the wider community.

Respect

Researchers should respect the privacy, confidentiality and cultural sensitivities of the participants. Respect for human beings involves ensuring that they are free to make their own decisions.

Key ethical considerations

The actual practice of ethics in social research can be complex and pose many ethical questions that researchers must navigate. Human research can involve significant risks, and, despite the best of intentions and careful planning, these risks can occur. It's therefore important to be aware of key ethical considerations when it comes to human research, and what is considered best practice (acknowledging that this may vary based on the context of the research).

Harms and benefits

Ethical research should bring about good and do no harm. Harms can occur in any research study, qualitative or quantitative. Researchers must carefully reflect on any risks of potential harms, discomforts or inconveniences to participants. Harms can be physical (illness or injury), psychological (stress, embarrass-ment, anger), social (damages to relationships, stigmatisation), economic and legal. There are contextual and personal factors that influence how harms are felt, so the impact of harms are different for everyone. Researchers must be prepared to respond to any risks, and have strategies in place to minimise risks and maximise benefits. The benefits of the research may include producing new knowl-edge or insight, empowering participants to be included in investigation of issues that impact their lives, the improvement of services, and gaining skills and expertise for researchers.

> " Research is ethically acceptable only when its potential benefits justify any risks involved in the research.[2]

Informed consent

To protect participants from deception and psychological harm, researchers must obtain informed consent. Informed consent means that a participant has sufficient information and understanding of the research study, knows what is required of them, what will happen to their data and what rights they have to access or withdraw from the research. Gaining informed consent shows honesty - that the researcher has not deceived participants about the study.

Often, written consent is obtained through providing participant information sheets and receiving signed consent forms, but also can be provided verbally, or electron-ically through online surveys. Researchers need to make sure that potential participants know that their agreement to participate is completely voluntary and that they are free to opt out before, during, or after their initial partici-pation. Participants should be able to follow up with any questions or concerns they may have about a project with the researcher who

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2   National Statement (2007) Chapter 2

can provide them with further information. It is important that information sheets and consent forms are written in language that participants can easily read and understand and that they are free of technical jargon.

Under the National Statement, consent should be provided by the individual themselves. However, there may be circumstances where others are involved in an individual's decision to take part, if a person lacks capacity to provide fully informed consent (such as those highly dependent on medical care, and people living with an intellectual disability or mental illness). The National Statement also requires the consent of parents, guardians or caregivers for young people under 18 years, as well as from the young person. The issue of deciding upon an individual's capacity to consent is highly contested, and can vary based on a multitude of social, environmental and cultural factors.

Confidentiality

In a world where technology and the Internet is now a common feature of everyday life, it is important that we maintain the privacy of participants and strive to protect personal information. A breach of confidentiality violates a person's rights and can pose harm, from embarrassment and shame, to stigmatisation, and even damage to social and economic status, such as loss of employment.

A participant information sheet should detail how an individuals' identity will be protected. Researchers use a number of methods to keep participant's identity confidential, for example, through the use of password protected files and encryption when storing data online. Often, study participants will not be identified by names, but by other identifiers, such as gender and/or age. Where a name and other information that could be used to identify the participant is collected, data is often 'de-identified'. This means that names are changed to a pseudonym or unique identifier, and any other identifying information (such as where the person lives or works) is removed for analysis and publication in reports or papers. Further, researchers should only report findings that are relevant to the research and that do not reveal the identity of any one individual.

Accessibility and inclusion

Social research is about the experiences of human individuals, groups, and communities. To create meaningful outcomes, research should be equitable, non-discriminatory, accessible and inclusive, particularly for underrepresented groups. Some of these communities may include:

> People living with a disability (including physical, intellectual and psycho-social impairments);

> LGBTQIA+ communities;

> People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and non-English speaking backgrounds;

> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;

> Children and young people;

> Individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds; and

> Groups with low digital literacy/access.

To be inclusive and accessible, research should carefully consider what approaches and methods of research will be appropriate with different groups. To do so, researchers should consult with people with lived experience early on in the research design to ensure the concerns and needs of people who may be asked to participate in the research can inform research questions and methods. Research can also be more accessible and inclusive by including those with lived experience in the research topic as co-researchers or peer researchers. The participation of marginalised groups can enhance the accuracy and authenticity of the final research results and their applications.

Compensation

Researchers should aim to appropriately compensate participants for their efforts, contributions and time, especially if participation could leave them at a financial loss, or cause them to miss out on study or work. Where participants are required to travel, compensation can be provided to participants through reimbursement for any costs (e.g. travel, parking, accommodation), or for their time. Common examples of compensation for research participants in Australia include gift cards.

The potentially most ethically problematic form of payment to research participants is an incentive, which is used to encourage participation, for example, the chance to win a prize for completing a survey. While it is understandable that incentives may be required to recruit and maintain participants in a study, such incentives cannot be set at levels that would unduly influence a participant to take part or remain in a study.

Whatever the compensation, participants must be informed about what they will, or won't, receive. It is important to consider the age of participants, cultural context, the level of risk of the project, and participant vulnerability when deciding upon compensation. In some contexts, forms of compensation other than monetary values, may be more appropriate.

Case Studies of Ethical Challenges in Youth Research

For more case studies of ethical challenges, see the
Ethical Research Involving Children hub.

CASE STUDY #1

Using incentives in youth research[3]

The researchers in this project explored how youth programs can contribute to positive developmental outcomes for young people aged 12 – 18 years. To do this, they needed to recruit a large number of young people from diverse backgrounds and gain the consent of young people, their parents, guardians, teachers and programme leaders.

The ethical challenge:

The researchers needed to decide upon an incentive that would encourage participation from young people in a relevant and attractive way, without applying any undue influence. It was important to mediate the differential power relationship between young people and adults in their roles as parent, guardian, teacher and programme leaders.

Strategy:

The researchers decided to use a mix of incentives and revealed different incentive options at the outset of the research project so that everyone involved was fully informed.

The first incentive was altruism-based to gain support and consent from adults. It was hoped that this strategy would appeal to young people that saw the value of the research. Each young person was presented with an individually named certificate of appreciation and presented with "thank you" messages throughout their participation, from the site visits to visual messages of 'thank you' at the beginning and end of the questionnaire and in the information and consent packages.

The second part of the strategy was a financial incentive. Each young person was offered the opportunity to go into a prize draw of $20 gift vouchers. Although each single prize was small in value, each young person had a one-in-four chance of winning, making it a more equitable form of incentive as it was widely shared. Only retail store specific gift vouchers were offered (and not retail chain specific to reduce the chance they could be used to purchase alcohol).

The researchers concluded that the coercive effect of incentives can be minimised by moderating and contextualising their use and by emphasising voluntary consent at all levels.

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3   Seymour, K. (2012). Using incentives: encouraging and recognising participation in youth research. *Youth Studies Australia,* 31(3), 51-59.

CASE STUDY #2

Using stories to obtain informed consent from 4-year-olds[4]

The researchers in this project explored 4-year-old children's experiences of outdoor learning in an early childhood education in Perth. The researchers were interested in learning about children's perspectives of student-centred and inquiry-driven learning experiences in these settings.

The ethical challenge:

The main ethical challenge that arose in this project was getting the staff of the childhood centres to contribute to a respectful research culture, whereby the voices of children could be heard and realised in the research. The researchers needed to ensure that the child participants were able to make informed choices about their participation in the research and were given opportunities to give their consent or dissent.

Strategy:

The researchers employed a tool called 'informing stories' – in practice, an 'informing story' – to provide child-friendly information about the research project, helping the children to gain an understanding of their rights and other ethical concepts. These stories were conveyed via interactive technologies and reading strategies. Through this, the researchers and educators were able to support the children in making informed choices about their participation in the research process. It also helped to clarify the expectations of the research for the educators and the parents of the child participants, providing a common ground of understanding with all parties involved.

CASE STUDY #3

Interviewing young people on sensitive topics[5]

As part of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, researchers were tasked with understanding how children and young people experience safety and the ways that they think adults and organisations should prevent and respond to instances of child abuse.

The ethical challenge:

Being a very sensitive and mature issue to discuss with children and young people, the researchers had to devise a method of facilitating these discussions about child sexual abuse with participants in a way that would protect them from material that could be triggering or cause them discomfort or distress.

Strategy:

The researchers opted to conduct semi-structured interviews with participants that involved a more casual, open-ended dialogue. The focus of the interview was to be driven by the young person themself, allowing for them to guide the discussion in a direction that they felt comfortable with. For example, participants were asked to make two mind-maps labelled 'safe' and 'unsafe', and for each mind-map they were asked to consider 'who', 'where' 'when' and 'what' made them feel that way. Then, the researchers asked the participant to choose some of their needs from their mind-map and consider whether those needs were being responded to by organisations. As such, the young person had the power to choose what they did and did not want to speak about during the interview.

4   Mayne, F., & Howitt, C. (2022). *The Narrative Approach to informed consent: Empowering young children's rights and meaningful participation*. Routledge: Oxford.
5   Moore, T., McArthur, M., Roche, S., Death, J., & Tilbury, C. (2016). *Safe and Sound: Exploring the Safety of Young People in Residential Care: a Report for the Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*. Canberra: Institute of Child Protection Studies.

Obtaining ethical approval for university research

In Australia, research conducted in or by universities that involves human participants must be approved by an accredited Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The primary purpose of a HREC is to protect the welfare and rights of the participants involved in the research.

When applying for ethical approval, researchers need to:

> Be familiar with details in the National Statement, and national and university ethical policies and procedures;

> Ensure their research is supported by methods that are academically, professionally and ethically sound;

> Only start research activity after ethics approval has be issued;

> Ensure their research activities are fully compliant with the terms of their ethics approval;

> Apply for approval of any proposed changes to the methodology, participants, location and research tools before these are actioned; and

> At a minimum, report annually on any approved research projects.

It is important to follow the guidelines, policies and procedures set by your research institution when developing research protocols for ethical approval.

Recommended reading

Anh, D. P., Almeida, K., Munyanyiwa, T., Payne, E., Prakash, M., & Senior, I. (2020). A Better Normal: Girls Call For A Revolutionary Reset. PLAN International.

Australian College of Applied Professions. (2021). Research Ethics: Conducting research with honesty and integrity.

Deakin University (2021) Human Ethics

Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D., & Fitzgerald, R. (2013). Ethical Research Involving Children. UNICEF Office of Research.

Hesse-Biber, S., & Leavy, P. (2011). The Ethics of Social Research. In S. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 59-89). Sage Publications Ltd.

Mandal, J., Acharya, S., & Parija, S. C. (2011). Ethics in human research. *Tropical Parasitology, 1*(1), 2-3.

Mathikithela, M., & Wood, L. (2021). Youth Participatory Action Research as a Catalyst for Health Promotion in a Rural South African School. *Qualitative Research in Education, 10*(2), 144-171.

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2018). National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) - Updated 2018.

Seymour, K. (2012). Using incentives: encouraging and recognising participation in youth research. *Youth Studies Australia, 31*(3), 51-59.

Smart, A. (2018, March 8). Ethical considerations in research and evaluation with children and young people. *Australian Institute of Family Studies.*

The Evergreen State College. (n.d.). Understanding Confidentiality and Anonymity.

University of Western Sydney (2020) Research Integrity and Ethics

Ussher, J. M., Hawkey, A., Perz, J., Liamputtong, P., Marjadi, B., Schmied, V., Dune, T., Sekar, J. A., Ryan, S., Charter, R., Thepsourin-thone, J., Noack-Lundberg, K., & Brook, E. (2020). *Crossing the line: Lived experience of sexual violence among trans women of colour from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Australia* (Research report, 14/2020). Sydney: ANROWS.

Youth
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Training Guide: Power and Privilege in Social Research

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RESILIENT
RESEARCH
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DEAKIN
UNIVERSITY

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UNIVERSITY

Training Guide: Power and Privilege in Social Research

Power and privilege are important concepts to understand when it comes to planning, conducting and communicating research. Power and privilege are intertwined in everything that we do as researchers, from the recruitment of participants, to the selection of research methods, data collection, analysis and the presentation of findings.

As researchers, it is crucial to understand the dynamics of power and privilege, where and how these exist, and how they shape the research. This is important so that research is ethical and respects all those involved.

What is power?

Power is defined as the ability or capacity to act in a particular way, and influence the behaviours of others or events.[1] It exists and operates through our relationships with people, places and objects. The nature of power is fluid, as it constantly shifts and changes in different contexts. Power exists within all individuals and is expressed through actions and words in different ways - directly (i.e conflict) and indirectly (i.e manipulation). Not everyone has the same amount of power and for some individuals it is easier to obtain and use power than others.

When we talk about how power operates among groups and in society, we use the following terms:[2]

Disadvantaged, minority, marginalised and oppressed

Refers to groups or individuals who have less access to power or privilege. Often those who have been exploited, ignored and dehumanised.

Dominant, privileged, advantaged

Refers to groups or individuals who have more access to power and privilege. These groups or individuals can move through life without facing the same difficulties as others, because of the social, cultural and/or economic advantages that they have.

Whether certain people or groups are in a position of disadvantage or dominance in society is socially constructed. It is not 'natural' or 'normal' for any one group to have more or less privilege or power over another.

As researchers, we need to make sure that power dynamics do not cause harm to participants or disrespect their rights, or lead to unreliable data. To effectively do this, researchers can draw on strategies to achieve fair and just practices.

Some examples of relationships in research where one party may have more power than another:

≥ **Interviewer and participant.**

A participant may feel the need to respond in a certain way to please the researcher, due to their perceived authority.

≥ **Young researcher and senior researcher.**

A young researcher may tend to agree with the decisions of a senior researcher, even if they disagree.

≥ **Parents and child participants.**

A child's parent has the power to provide consent, so has direct influence over whether they participate in the research or not.

≥ **Between participants.**

A strongly opinionated participant in a focus group may influence the responses of other participants, or discourage them from contributing.

These relationships of power can change based on different settings and contexts. Can you think of situations where the power balance might shift? What would it mean for the senior researcher if the young researcher had lived experience on the research topic, and they did not?

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1   Lexico, n.d, Power. In **Lexico.com dictionary,** accessed 20 May 2022
2   University of Colorado Denver (2022), *Diversity, Enquiry & Inclusion 101*, Office of Equity, accessed on 13 May 2022

What is privilege?

Privilege is defined as "a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available to a particular person or group."[3] It also refers to the "degrees of prestige and respect" that people experience because of their identity.[4]

Individuals or groups can experience oppression as a result of privilege being

intentionally or unintentionally executed on others. However, privilege does not mean that people do not experience hardships, or that the individual or group did not work hard to get to the position they are in.[5]

Understanding your privilege is not only important in research, but an important part of creating

a more inclusive society. You can take an online privilege walk **here**, to understand the gap that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Your level of power is based on many different factors of your identity, from what you look like, to your abilities and where you live. Where do you fit in this wheel? As you relate to the different categories, notice how your level of power and marginalisation shifts.
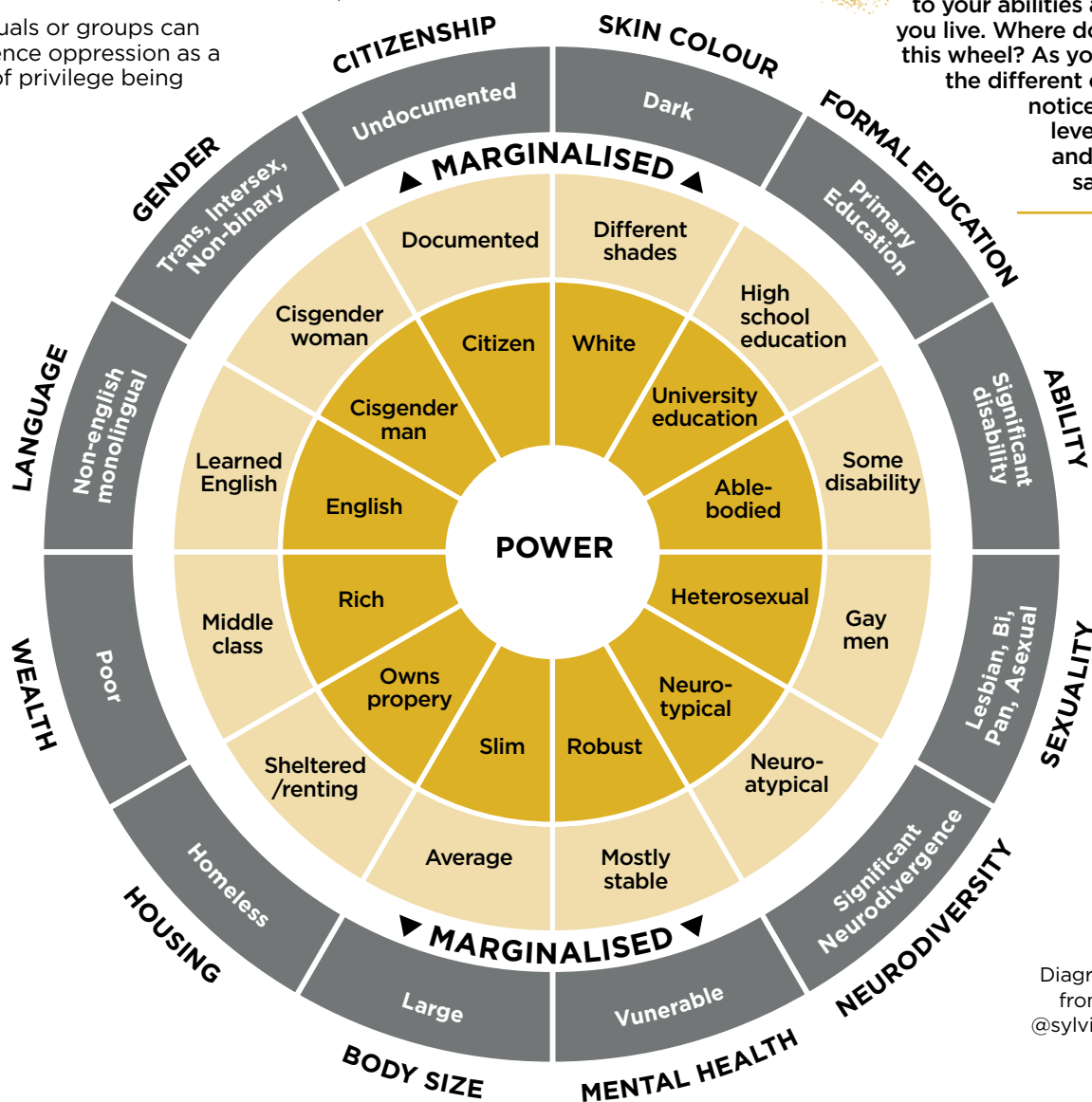
Diagram adapted from cerweb.ca @sylviaduckworth

Key points	Power and privilege are interconnected	Power is not static	Power and privilege influence someone's ability to access resources, like money and jobs	Privilege is understood through social power systems, e.g. class, gender and race

3   Lexico, n.d, Privilege. In **Lexico.com dictionary,** accessed 20 May 2022
4   University of Colorado Denver (2022), *Diversity, Enquiry & Inclusion 101*, Office of Equity, accessed on 13 May 2022
5   Ibid.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the interconnected identities that someone experiences. It involves layers of meaning that are influenced by status, personal experience, context and how, when and where these identities are within society.

The intersections within an individual's identity create unique experiences within their everyday lives. Members of historically oppressed groups, such as those living with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, refugees, and LGBTQIA+ people, experience the impact of intersectionality.

When marginalised identities intersect, the likelihood of oppression and discrimination increases, which magnifies social and economic disadvantage for these groups and individuals.[6]

It is important to be aware of intersectionalities because it reveals people's nuanced experiences, which are often overlooked and sometimes not overtly visible. Intersectionality can produce compounding forms of disadvantage, as well as unique knowledge and strength from which people and groups can challenge inequality and injustice.

What does intersectionality look like?

Ameera (she/her) is a Muslim young person of refugee status who identifies as gay. Her religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity and immigration status shape her experiences, like where she lives and her access to support, now and into the future.
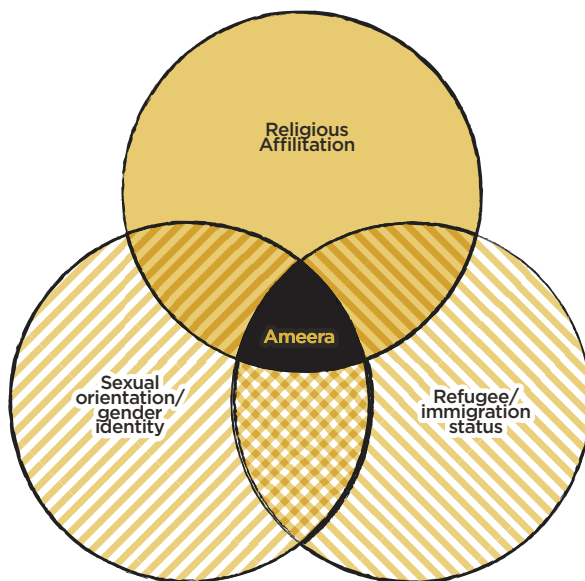
Joey (he/him) is a young white person with a learning disability. His ethnicity, ability and socio-economic status intersect to make up his identity which creates his lived experiences, like what services he can access and the relationships he has with others.
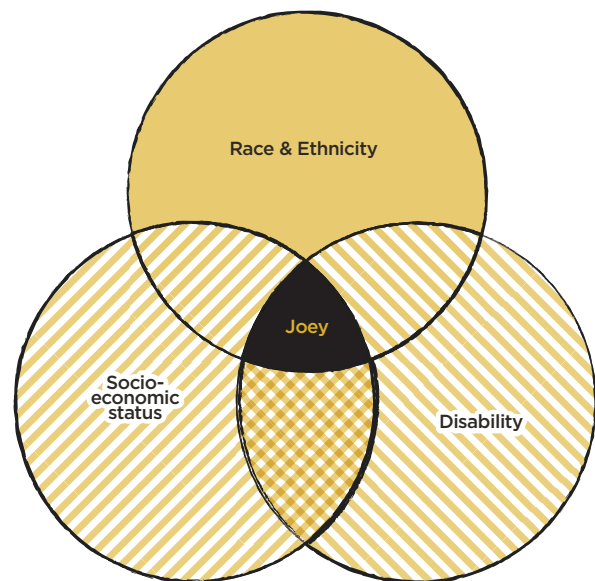
Diagrams: National Association of School Psychologists (2017)

See **this video** by the **Intersectional Souls** Project for different examples and situations where intersectionality exists.

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6   National Association of School Psychologists (2017) *Understanding Intersectionality* [Handout]. Bethesda, MD: Author.

There are many different aspects of a person's identity to consider when thinking about intersectionality:[7]

Race	Criminal History	Religion	Age	Language	Mental health
Ethnicity	Indigenous	Sexual Orientation	Class	Seniority	Migration or visa status
Nationality	Class	Education	Ability	Housing Status	Medical history
Gender	Language	Colour	Socio-economic status	Geographical location	Work experience

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7   Government of Victoria (2021) *Understanding Intersectionality,* accessed on 20 May, 2022; Canadian Council for Refugees, n.d, *Anti-oppression*, accessed 20 May, 2022.

Ethical issues of Power and Privilege in Research

Australian researchers have obligations under the **National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)** to conduct respectful, beneficial, and fair research. This requires researchers to be aware of power dynamics and recognise how intersectionality may influence research participants' lived experiences, and how this may impact their participation.[8]

Positions of privilege, authority, or influence may impact participants' ability to freely make informed decisions. This is particularly important when working with children and young people and marginalised groups. For example, participants may feel pressured to take part in the research or feel that they cannot withdraw from the study due to the researcher having a level of authority, or power, over them.

When planning and conducting research, **the National Statement (2007)** provides some important considerations to reflect on how power may cause ethical issues:

≥ Does the research method ensure that the participants can meaningfully participate without any harm or prejudice?

≥ Does the participant have the capacity to understand what the research involves?

≥ Has the participant given informed consent to participate in the research?

≥ Is there a possibility that the participant will be coerced (pressured) by others (e.g. researchers, parents, friends or other adults)?

≥ Are there conflicting interests and values between children and their parents during the research?

Researchers from UNICEF Innocenti have recommended the following principles when it comes to the ethical considerations required to address intersectionality, power and privilege:[9]

Harms and benefits	Informed Consent	Privacy and Confidentiality	Financial Reimbursement
≥ Explain why research is conducted with specific cohorts and why certain groups are included or excluded from the research. ≥ Consider all potential harms and benefits - no matter how big or small. ≥ Have strategies and protocols in place to minimise distress and safeguard research participants from harm. ≥ Have support available for research participants throughout the research process. ≥ Identify clear pathways for responding to research participants concerns.	≥ Ensure all participants are fully informed about the research and what is required of them during the research process. ≥ Explain that participants can negotiate what they consent to do in the research. ≥ Respect participants' decisions within the research - even if they want to withdraw from the research. ≥ Consider whether the consent processes are appropriate and accessible for all research participants. ≥ Recognise the advantages and disadvantages of parental consent. ≥ Consider the cultural appropriateness of consent within multiple contexts.	≥ Respect the research participant's right to privacy and that all information is confidential. ≥ Store, deposit and protect all data in accordance with your organisation's data management policies. Let the research participants know where it is stored, who has access to the data and how long will the data be stored for. ≥ Know what to do when there are safety concerns about the research participants' data.	≥ Make sure that all reimbursements are not used to influence the research participants to take part in the research. ≥ Manage the expectations of the research participants. ≥ Consult the cultural appropriateness of your proposed reimbursement and the ways that participants receive payments during the research process.

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8   Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. & Fitzgerald, R. (2013). *Ethical Research Involving Children*. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research: Innocenti.
9   Ibid

Strategies to navigate ethical issues of power and privilege in research

There are many moments in a research project when power dynamics should be considered. Below are some examples of these and how they could be addressed. Consider the following strategies to address some of the ethical issues relating to power imbalances in unequal or dependent relationships.

Power dynamic	Stage of research process	Potential ethical issues related to power imbalances	Strategies to navigate power imbalance issues
Researchers and children and young people	Research design and planning	≥ **Research is not beneficial to young people as it is set by adult agendas.** ≥ **Research is not just as it excludes young people from being engaged as collaborative researchers, as they are perceived to lack skill/experience.** ≥ **Research is not just as terminology is inaccessible.**	≥ **Adopt a co-research approach, where young people are embedded into the research team and share decision-making, and input into formulating research questions and research design.** ≥ **Seek input from youth advisory groups in initial stages of planning.** ≥ **Present proposed research questions and research design in layman terms - keep it simple!** ≥ **Reinforce that young people are the experts of their lived experiences.**
	Recruitment	≥ **Research does not allow participants to make freely informed decisions, and they are pressured to take part.** ≥ **Participants are uninformed as consent forms are inaccessible.**	≥ **Reiterate that decisions to participate or not will not affect their relationship with the researchers, or any other partners involved.** ≥ **Provide a youth-friendly, plain language version of the consent form.**
	Data collection	≥ **Research is not just as it does not value young people's time involved in the research.** ≥ **Participants feel pressured to respond to senior interviewers in a particular way.** ≥ **Participants feel pressured by observation of adults.**	≥ **Encourage participants to start and lead the conversation during the study. Ask additional open-ended questions to guide the participants.** ≥ **Encourage participants to ask questions throughout the study.** ≥ **Spend time building rapport with participants so that they feel comfortable to be honest.** ≥ **Consider the setting/location of the study - youth spaces are less intimidating than corporate offices.** ≥ **Consider your body language, what you wear and how you talk and act with participants.** ≥ **Ensure that there are not more adults than young people in the room.** ≥ **Provide appropriate remuneration to thank participants for their time.**

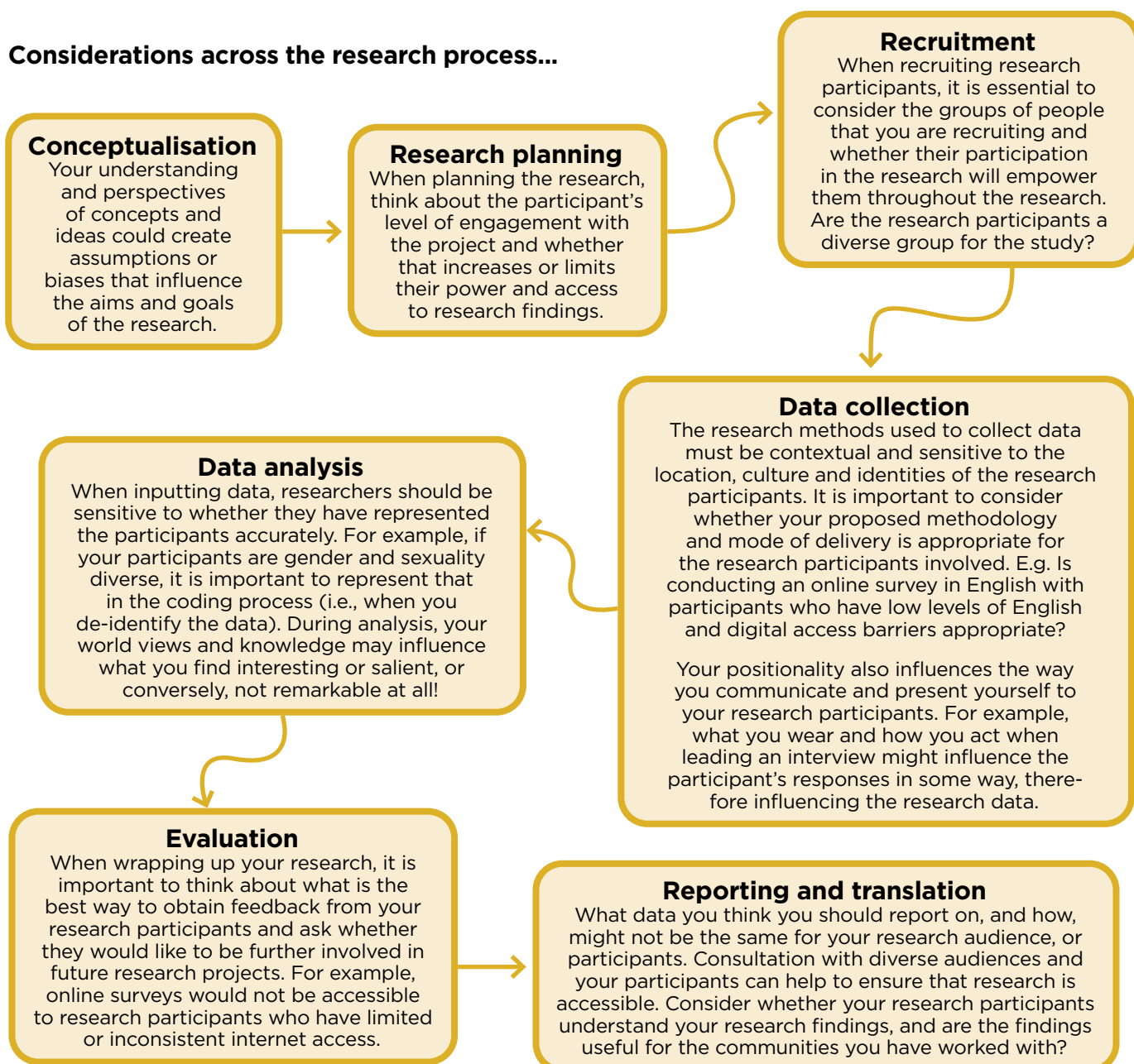| Power dynamic	Stage of research process	Potential ethical issues related to power imbalances	Strategies to navigate power imbalance issues
Researchers and marginal-ised groups	Data collection	≥ **Research does not allow participants to make freely informed decisions to take part.** ≥ **Research is not inclusive as methods are inaccessible.**	≥ **Translate consent form into the participant's first language.** ≥ **Use interpreters during the research process.** ≥ **Avoid technical jargon.** ≥ **Ensure that consent forms are accessible to all research participants (i.e. by utilising the National Relay Service).** ≥ **Consult research participants and ask: What is their preferred method of communication? How would they like to be involved in the research?** ≥ **Consider how your chosen methods of data collection are accessible for all people, and plan for accessibility requirements (e.g. Auslan interpreters).**
Children and parents	Recruitment and Data collection	≥ **Research is not respectful as parents may coerce children to take part.** ≥ **Children feel pressured to respond in certain ways in the presence of parents.**	≥ **Ensure that as well as parental consent, informed consent is received from the child.** ≥ **Reiterate that participation is voluntary.** ≥ **Consider separating children and parents when collecting data from both groups.**

Exploring your positionality

Positionality refers to the positions and perspectives that a researcher has and draws upon when conducting research.[10] Exploring your own positionality will help you to develop your reflexivity, a crucial skill to have as a researcher.

Being reflexive is going one-step further than being reflective, and is about examining your own world views, judgments, assumptions and identity - and considering how these might shape the research. Awareness of these is crucial in research so that you can identify any personal beliefs, interactions or relationships with others, or ideas you have about the world, that might affect the research. For example, your pre-existing political beliefs may influence how you conduct an interview with someone about the election, and it may influence the patterns that you find in data, and even how you report on these findings.

Whilst reflexivity can help you to become aware of your own biases and be accountable for these, it's important to note that these will never be eliminated completely.[11]

Considerations across the research process...

Conceptualisation
Your understanding and perspectives of concepts and ideas could create assumptions or biases that influence the aims and goals of the research.

Research planning
When planning the research, think about the participant's level of engagement with the project and whether that increases or limits their power and access to research findings.

Recruitment
When recruiting research participants, it is essential to consider the groups of people that you are recruiting and whether their participation in the research will empower them throughout the research. Are the research participants a diverse group for the study?

Data collection
The research methods used to collect data must be contextual and sensitive to the location, culture and identities of the research participants. It is important to consider whether your proposed methodology and mode of delivery is appropriate for the research participants involved. E.g. Is conducting an online survey in English with participants who have low levels of English and digital access barriers appropriate?

Your positionality also influences the way you communicate and present yourself to your research participants. For example, what you wear and how you act when leading an interview might influence the participant's responses in some way, therefore influencing the research data.

Data analysis
When inputting data, researchers should be sensitive to whether they have represented the participants accurately. For example, if your participants are gender and sexuality diverse, it is important to represent that in the coding process (i.e., when you de-identify the data). During analysis, your world views and knowledge may influence what you find interesting or salient, or conversely, not remarkable at all!

Evaluation
When wrapping up your research, it is important to think about what is the best way to obtain feedback from your research participants and ask whether they would like to be further involved in future research projects. For example, online surveys would not be accessible to research participants who have limited or inconsistent internet access.

Reporting and translation
What data you think you should report on, and how, might not be the same for your research audience, or participants. Consultation with diverse audiences and your participants can help to ensure that research is accessible. Consider whether your research participants understand your research findings, and are the findings useful for the communities you have worked with?

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10 Holmes, A. (2020) Researcher Positionality - A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research - A New Researcher Guide, *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, **8**, 4, pp. 1-10.
11 Ibid.

Example positionality statement in cross-cultural qualitative research

My personal experiences, alongside my ethnicity, age, and gender both influence the project and explain how I am positioned within the project. I am a young Caucasian female with a tertiary education. I was born in England and migrated to Australia three years ago. I thought about water in two ways: environmentally and economically. This is due to firstly, my educational background in Environmental Science and thus my understanding of the consequences of water wasting, and secondly, my financial situation as a student living in shared houses.

The researcher's identity and how it impacts the research

Growing up in England, I believe my own water culture to be slightly different to that of other Australians my age. Living up to its stereotype, I remember England as being very wet. In contrast, I have learnt through personal experience whilst living in Australia that Australians take water restrictions very seriously, for example with neighbours policing each other's water usage.As I have never lived without mains (town) water, I find this concept of relying on another source very unfamiliar. The only experience I have had in this context was when I travelled south-east Asia and avoided drinking the local tap water and bought bottled water instead, or when camping and having to collect water from an outside tap.

Commonalities and differences with research participants

Researching the Burmese community was not something that I had planned to do. Yet, after undertaking preliminary research, I felt that the inclusion of a minority group in the household sustainability field was very important. Seeing as I know very little about Burmese culture and can speak no Burmese, I am slightly apprehensive about participant recruitment and interviewing. How will I gain access to the Burmese community in Australia when I am not Burmese, and do not know anyone who is?

What the researcher wants to achieve and how their positionality will impact the research process

Recognise relationships, contexts and cultures

Each research participant comes with different lived experiences, relationships, contexts and cultures. To address unequal relationships of power and privilege within research, it is important to recognise the broader social, cultural, economic and political factors that shape the research participant and why and how they take part in the research.

Researchers should also consider the relationships that arise before, during and after the research process. These relationships include, but are not limited to, researchers, parents/guardians/carers, children and young people, other adults, partner organisations, institutions and funding bodies.[12] These relationships are connected with both collective cultures, for example, a young person's identity in the context of their community, and individually.[13]

Researchers should spend time understanding the research participants' context and identity positions and how these might produce intersecting forms of disadvantage, discrimination - or privilege - and build relationships by respecting their lived experiences and maximising their benefits through the research. It is particularly important to consider, in the context of children and young people, whether they would be able to speak freely within their communities (e.g. if they were in gender-specific or culturally specific groups) and the role of adults within their lived experiences.

Recommended resources

University of Southern California (2020) **Diversity Toolkit: A guide to discussing identity, power and privilege**, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work.

Peggy, M. (1989) **"White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" and Some Notes for Facilitators"**. In SEED: The National SEED Project.

Fujii, L. (2012) **Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities**,

Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, S. (2015) "What exactly is intersectionality?" Published in Intersectional Souls Project resource section: **http://intersectionalsouls.weebly.com/what-is-intersectionality.html**

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12 Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. & Fitzgerald, R. (2013). *Ethical Research Involving Children*. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti.
13 Ibid.

Activity: Writing your positionality statement

What is your positionality as a researcher?

In 1 paragraph, consider your positionality as a researcher and how you shape the research. Think about...

≥   Who am I? What is my identity? What powers or privileges do I hold? What disadvantages do I face?

≥   How do I view myself? How do others view me?

≥   What are my beliefs (political, religious, environmental, social)?

≥   What do I value?

≥   What is my lived experience of the research topic?

≥   How do I think about the research topic? Why do I think this way?

≥   What is my relationship with the research participants?
     What commonalities and differences are there?

≥   What do I want to achieve in the research?

≥   What questions do I have? What am I unsure or uncertain of?

This will help you understand the connection between you and the research, and surface any power dynamics that may influence the research. Remember that finding your positionality is a complex process and involves deep thinking. It takes time and should not be rushed. It is something you should return to and consider in each phase of a research project.

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Training Guide: Introduction to Research Project Management

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DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

Training Guide: Introduction to Research Project Management

Well run research projects use a project management methodology to ensure that the purpose and scope of the project, team roles and responsibilities, and the timeline for the different activities, milestones and deliverables are clear to all involved. Project management helps a team work well, stay focused and deliver research on time. Whatever your role in the research team, it is good to know a little about project management so you can use the tools to help you best do your job (and keep others on track)!

As a co-researcher, there might come a time where you are asked to oversee a research project or activity. When this happens, it is important that you are able to implement effective project management skills, as this will help you and your team keep organised and on-top of your project objectives and deadlines. This guide is designed to provide you with some introductory strategies and skills to help you on your way.

Planning

Research projects are often very complex and the exact outcome is difficult to plan for. This is the nature of research as we cannot ever be sure what we will uncover! Research projects are often influenced by factors beyond our control and it is common for the research process to be disordered. Things can go wrong as often as they go right, but planning, with continuous adjustment and adaptation, will help you to reach your milestones and complete the project within the expected time-frame. Some questions you should consider when planning research include:

≥ **What are the research objectives of the project?**

This is important because the research objectives will inform the scope of your project such as timelines and budgets.

≥ **What are the resources available?**

Research design and activities often need to be planned with the available resources in mind.

Limited funding or people to work on a project will require you to make decisions about how many meetings are held, how much data is collected, how thoroughly it is analysed, how many outputs are produced and how these are disseminated. It is important to remind team members about the scope of the project to ensure that you do not have problems with budget, or completing a project that goes beyond the original plan.

≥ **What are the major milestones I will need to complete?**

Milestones might consist of getting ethics approval, completing data collection, drafting a report, submitting a publication, etc.

Break each of these milestones down into the specific tasks that you and your team will need to complete to reach them.

≥ **How much time will I need to reach each milestone and complete each activity?**

Make realistic estimates of how long it will take to complete each task.

Consider the particular method of data collection you are using, as some types of data will take longer to analyse than others. You should also think about what kinds of resources you will need to complete certain activities, e.g. software, support from other researchers. Also consider any time periods where you won't be working, e.g. over holidays. It is always good practice to add in extra 'buffer time', in case things take longer than you think!

≥ **How are the different aspects of the project interrelated?**

This will help to adjust time-frames and identify any roadblocks you might encounter along the way.

For instance, do you need to complete fieldwork before you undertake analysis?

To plan out a research project, you could use a Gantt Chart – this is a type of bar chart that illustrates a project's schedule. The chart allows for organising and viewing project activities and tasks against pre-established timeframes, and is useful for tracking progress. It can also be tweaked along the way to account for any changes that may arise. To develop a Gantt Chart, brainstorm all the milestones, the activities required for each milestone, and estimate how much time you will need.

Project management tool: Check out the Co-research Toolkit Gantt Chart template **here**. You can make a copy to edit the template.

Problem-solving and creative thinking

Things will not always go according to plan, and effective project management will require problem-solving and creative thinking in these situations. If confronted with a challenge, brainstorm any possible solutions that you could put into practice to overcome it. Ask yourself: 'How do we get to the end goal?'; 'Are there any alternatives?'.

Teamwork

Teamwork really does make the dream work. It is key to ensuring that your project runs smoothly and that resources are well-managed. Work with your team to plan out the research activities and assign responsibilities. Consider setting up weekly check-in meetings with the team to discuss your work, review the project timeline, and provide each other with support.

Clear communication

Having good and clear internal communication with your research team will keep confusion to a minimum, allowing the project to progress more smoothly and with less delays. To facilitate this, you might consider setting up a team channel on Slack, Discord or Microsoft Teams where your team can post updates about how the project is progressing and what still needs to be done. Ensuring that everyone has access to the information and resources they need to deliver their part of the project is important. Regular meetings that check on progress and identify any problems or risks can also help.

Other key skills and qualities for research project management include:

≥ **Effective decision-making. This article** includes some good strategies and things to think about when approaching decision-making, including some of the things you should avoid.

≥ **Flexibility.** The best project managers will be adaptable to changes and developments that arise along the way. Whilst planning for these changes is not always possible (after all, some things can be totally unpredictable!), you might find it helpful to identify in advance the aspects of the project that you estimate will be the most likely to change in the future and give yourself some extra buffer time in your schedule to adapt. **This webpage gives some useful tips.**

≥ **Ability to prioritise.** Prioritisation isn't always an easy thing to do, but it's an important part of being able to manage a project successfully. Luckily, there's a lot of things you can do to make the process of prioritising easier for yourself. **This blog provides 9 different techniques** that can aid you on your journey to mastering the art of prioritisation.

≥ **Transparency.** Be honest and clearly communicate with your team, and other stakeholders, about the project's progress. Let others know if deadlines are missed, why, and work together to re-negotiate these.

≥ **Ability to regularly review progress and address any successes or failures.** At the end of a milestone or project, you might consider bringing the team together to review what went well, what didn't go so well or what was challenging. You could use a retrospective meeting template on **Miro** for online meetings to celebrate your achievements, and document any learnings. By identifying what areas you will need to work on with your team, you can actively improve your team's performance and level of efficiency going into the future.
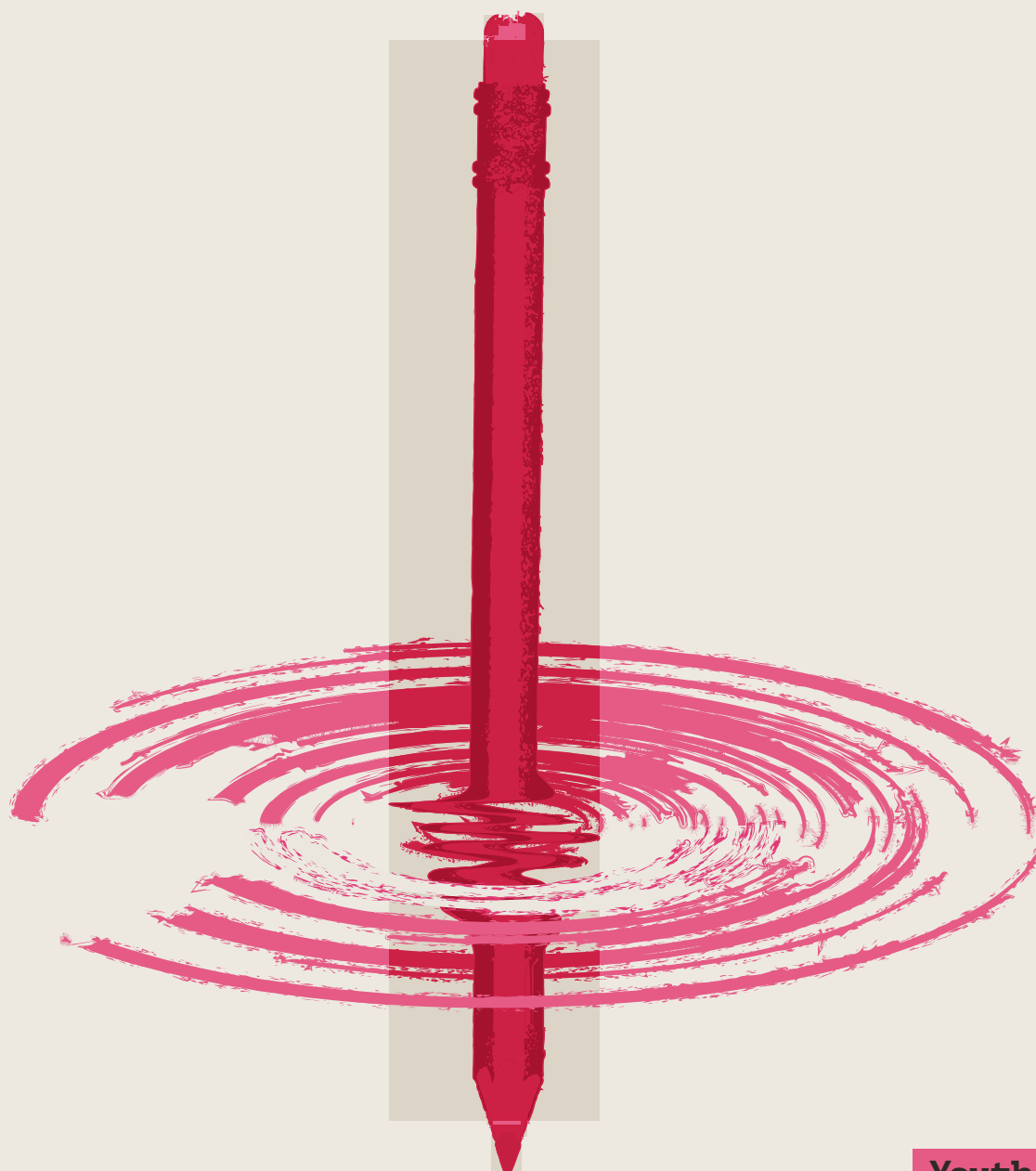
TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Youth
Co-research
TOOLKIT

Self-reflection journal

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YR
YOUNG &
RESILIENT
RESEARCH
CENTRE

cmy
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Multicultural Youth

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Researcher Self-reflection Journal

The purpose of this journal is so that as you build your skills and experience as a researcher, you can reflect on your goals, achievements, thoughts, feelings and challenges. As you document these, you will be able to identify your experiences, strengths, and areas for development. You can use the prompting questions here as a starting point to reflect on your experiences of research.

Reflecting on the beginning...

≥ **What do I want out of research?**

≥ **What do I want to achieve in the next month?**

≥ **What do I want to achieve in the next year?**

≥ **What am I feeling confident about?**

≥ **Where do I want to upskill?**

≥ **What am I feeling unsure about? What are my doubts?**

≥ **What expectations of research do I have?**

Reflecting as I gain new research experiences and skills...

≥ **What was I involved in? What was my role?**

≥ **What did I achieve/contribute to?**

≥ **What have I learnt?**

≥ **Who have I connected with?**

≥ **What did I enjoy the most?**

≥ **What challenged me?**

≥ **What surprised me?**

≥ **Did it go as expected? Why/why not?**

≥ **What can I improve on? How?**

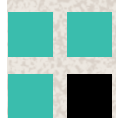# Reflecting on my journey...

≥ **What did I learn?**

≥ **What did I achieve? Was this different to what I thought initially?**

≥ **Where do I want to go from here? How can I get there?**

≥ **What inspires me?**

≥ **What motivates me?**

How to look after your wellbeing

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How to look after your wellbeing

Self-care is an important part of daily life and looking after our wellbeing allows us to live our lives positively and cope with life's changes and challenges. It is common at times to feel stressed and anxious, especially at work when we may feel burnt out or overwhelmed. Having a self-care plan can help us manage stressful times. A self-care plan reminds us of the activities we like to do for our physical and emotional wellbeing.

To look after ourselves holistically, there are five aspects of self-care to think about:

1 | Physical

Taking care of your physical health through activities that help you to stay fit and healthy, and with enough energy to get through the day. Broadly this means having a regular **sleep** routine, aiming for a healthy **diet**, and **exercising** regularly. This could be as simple as going for a walk on your lunch break, or scheduling a walking meeting with a colleague.

2 | Psychological

This is all about taking care of your mental wellbeing, in other words exercising your mental muscles to keep your mind healthy and sharp. This means participating in activities that you find engaging and stimulating, including **disconnecting** from electronic devices, pursuing a non-work-related **hobby**, or reading a book. One way to look after your mental wellbeing may be through updating your workspace. A clean workspace with pictures or artwork could help you gain more mental clarity, and also serve as a reminder of people and things that matter and inspire you.

3 | Emotional

Emotional wellbeing focuses on being aware of our emotional needs. This means allowing ourselves to experience the full range of our emotions. This can be done through activities that allow you to **connect, reflect and process your emotions** such as by keeping a **journal** or **talking** to people you trust about your life demands.

4 | Social

This is about developing **healthy and supportive relationships** with family and friends and making sure that you make time for the close relationships in your life. Plan regular catch-ups with friends and keep connected in the ways that best work for you.

5 | Spiritual

This is about things that make you feel calm and relaxed and help you take a step back from everything to **gain a sense of perspective beyond day-to-day life**. This can be spending time in nature, self-reflection through journaling, or trying yoga, or meditation.

Your self-care plan

Remember that self-care is very personal and the strategies that work for one person may not work for another. Your self-care plan can be as simple or as detailed as you need it to be. The important thing is to fill it with activities that you enjoy and that support your wellbeing. Remember that self-care isn't selfish!

≥ Try keeping the plan somewhere visible, so that you will be reminded to follow it!

≥ While your self-care plan might contain a lot of activities, try only adding one activity at a time into your routine, and once that becomes a habit, add another one from the plan.

≥ When adding to your plan, consider any barriers.

≥ What might get in the way of engaging in these activities?

≥ What can you do to remove those barriers?

Remember that practicing self-care doesn't need to take up heaps of time or be really complex!

Things I like to do...	Things I could try...
Physical	
Psycho-logical	
Emotional	
Social	
Spiritual	

Your self-care checklist

I have had conversations about my expectations and responsibilities as a co-researcher

I have expressed my reflections and concerns to my team members

I have taken proper breaks during the day

I have organised my time so that I have time for self-care

I have set boundaries for myself at work and communicated these to team members

I have someone I can contact if I feel stressed, overwhelmed or worried about the project

Check out some of these national services, extra resources and apps to learn more about mental health and wellbeing.

National services

Headspace is Australia's National Youth Mental Health Foundation. Their services can be accessed online or in their Headspace centres.

ReachOut provides lots of great advice for young people about self-care.

Beyond Blue provides lots of information and support about depression and anxiety.

Black dog Institute have an extensive range of research, resources, and support available on their website.

Apps and extra resources

Gather My Crew is a free rostering app that connects friends, family, and community members to someone who needs support.

Streaks is a to-do list based app that helps you form good habits or break bad ones. The app allows you to track tasks you want (or don't want) to complete each day, with the goal of building a streak of consecutive days.

Sleep cycle helps you to wake up feeling rested, and **Shleep** helps you to form healthy sleeping habits.

Headspace and **Calm** are two great apps that focus on the basics of meditation and mindfulness. The sessions range from 3 minutes to 25 minutes.

Five minute journal is a simple gratitude journaling app that helps you to reflect on the positive things that have happened during the day.

Aloe Bud sends regular gentle nudges to check on your wellbeing, such as by reminding you to eat, drink water, and reach out to friends. You can customise these nudges to set up personalised reminders.

This article provides tips for young professionals working from home.