

Dealing With Ethical Issues



This activity will help you to:

- Understand and recall some ways in which psychologists attempt to avoid and deal with ethical issues*
- Consider the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies*

Strategies for Dealing with Ethical Issues

In the past, the question of ethical responsibility was left up to the individual researcher. Since any researcher is capable of justifying their own research it became a common opinion that additional safeguards were needed. Two of these are outlined below. For each of these, suggest some strengths and weaknesses. We will then have a short discussion in which we will evaluate these strategies.

Strategy & what it involves	Possible strengths	Possible weaknesses
<p>Publishing ethical guidelines. The professional bodies for psychologists (e.g. the British Psychological Society) formulates and publishes a set of rules that attempt to clarify what is and is not acceptable during psychological research. For example, the current BPS guidelines say that deliberate deception should be avoided unless absolutely necessary, and that PPs should not be exposed to any greater risk than they face in everyday life.</p>		
<p>Using ethics committees. Universities establish committees staffed by senior psychologists. The committees examine every research proposal in the light of the ethical guidelines and other considerations. They have the power to approve or reject research, or enforce changes that must be made before the research is approved.</p>		