

Topic 2.3: Vulnerability

In this unit you will learn about supporting people who may have a hard time making decisions or need extra help understanding.

When you do research, you have to think about how different people may need to be included in research in different ways. Researchers think a lot about giving extra support to help people who are **vulnerable** or who may be more easily hurt in research or have a hard time making a decision.



Vulnerable is a big word. Vulnerable describes people who may have a hard time understanding information and making decisions.

Vulnerable can also mean people who may be more likely to be hurt in research.

Lots of people wonder whether adults with developmental disabilities are vulnerable, and people don't always agree. If it doesn't seem right to just say that all people with disabilities are vulnerable, there are many people who agree with you. We don't want to say that all people with a certain label like developmental disability are vulnerable in all situations.

Instead, researchers should think about what bad things might happen if someone agrees to be in a research study and whether the people asking the person to be in the study can influence their decision too much.

It is important to think about how you can help people understand the good and bad things about research and help them use their strengths to make their own decision.

It is also important to make sure everyone has the dignity of risk, or chances to make their own decisions even if they may not turn out well, and that how you set up your research isn't ableist, or discriminatory against people with disabilities. We will keep talking about how to balance keeping people safe, while also making sure people have the right to make their own choices.