

Unit 4: Keeping Research Participants Safe

Topic 4.1: Risks and Safeguards

Now that you know a lot about finding people to be in studies and working with them to make decisions, let's talk about the other responsibilities you have as a community research partner to keep people safe when they are in research.

Topic 4.1.1: Introduction to risks: Learning about psychological and physical risks



First, let's talk about some of the bad things or risks that can happen in research. We will start with bad feelings and ways bodies can be hurt. We talked earlier about how important it is to not hurt people when they are in research. This is the Belmont Principle called beneficence.

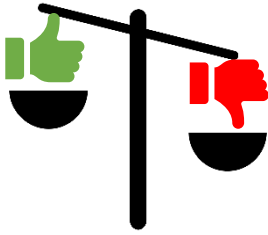


There are a few different ways people can be hurt in research. We call these **risks** or possible **harms**. Some of these things can hurt a lot, some things can hurt just a little bit. Some can hurt for a short time and some can hurt for a long time. Some harms happen to only a few people. Just because there are things that may hurt people who are in research doesn't mean everyone will get hurt!



Researchers try to keep bad things from happening when people are in research studies. You have an important role on your research team. You can share your ideas about what bad things may happen and what you can do to stop them from happening or make it so they don't hurt people too much.

The things you do to keep people safe are called **safeguards**.



Keeping people safe when they are in research studies is very important. There are always risks, or possible harms in research. Researchers have to make sure they balance the possible good things and the possible bad things. That means if there are going to be a lot of bad things, you have to do as much as you can to make sure the study helps participants and other people in the future. It also means you have to do more to make sure participants stay safe.

When you do research, you should always ask:

- “How can this project protect the people in this study from getting hurt?”
- “How can we make it as safe and easy as possible to be in this study?”

You should think carefully about the people who you ask to be in your study. Something that is hurtful to you might not feel hurtful to someone else. That’s because everyone has different comfort levels with different things.

For example, if a study is about experiences with healthcare providers, and someone recently was treated badly by a doctor, it might be more upsetting for them to talk about their healthcare experiences.

You want to keep in mind that different people might need different things to be safe in a research study. For example, people who have an aid who comes to research with them, might need different things to keep their information private than people who do not have an aid who comes with them to research.

There are different types of bad things that can happen to people in research. Remember, we call the possible bad things that can happen risks.