

## Topic 4.1.2: Physical and Psychological Risks and Safeguards



We will talk about the different types of risks in research and examples of how to reduce those risks.

**Physical risks** are about your physical health or how your body feels.



For example, someone could get hurt in a research study if they fall doing new exercises. To reduce the chances of falls happening, you might have people who want to be in the research study check with their healthcare providers to make sure it is safe for them to do the exercises. You could also have someone next to them or bars they can grab onto so they don't fall.



A more common physical risk might be feeling tired if you have to do research activities that take a long time. To help people not feel so tired, you might be able to give people breaks or have things they can fidget with.



**Psychological risks** are about how people feel.

An example might be feeling anxious during the research activities because you aren't sure what to do or because you are in a new place.

You might have good ideas about how to make people feel more comfortable—like sending pictures of where the research activities will be to people.



Sometimes you might do research about topics that are hard for people to talk about. Like we mentioned, different topics will be hard for different people. When we say hard, we mean a few things. Hard could mean that you are talking about or doing something that frustrates participants or is really confusing and it ends up making participants feel like they can't do it. Hard could also mean that it is upsetting to talk about the topic.

It is important to only ask questions about what you need to know to answer the research question. This way, no one has to talk about anything that is upsetting and not related to the research.

Another way to reduce psychological risks is to only ask about general topics if you don't need to know people's personal experiences to answer the research question.



You can plan breaks, let people skip part of the research activities, or stop if someone is too upset.

It is important to have a plan in case someone gets too upset. You can give them resources like hotline numbers or a local Center for Independent Living or Self-Advocacy group.

You can also have someone ready who knows how to help people who are feeling really upset, like a counselor, and call them when you need them. In the next unit we will talk about different kinds of risks.