

The APA Code of Ethics

The APA code of ethics applies to all psychologists who are members of the American Psychological Association. So it applies to Dr. Clark-Foos and to all the experimenters. By extension it applies to you. Although there are many principles, the most important principle is this: *The people who participate in our experiments are volunteers and they deserve to be treated with respect and shown appreciation..* Whenever you interact in an experiment with a subject you should keep that principle in mind.

Principle A: In planning a study, the investigator has the responsibility to make a careful evaluation of its ethical acceptability.

- *Even though the experiments we conduct are approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) the investigator still has an independent duty to make sure the study is ethical*

Principle B: Considering whether a participant in a planned study will be a "subject at risk" or a "subject at minimal risk" according to recognized standards is of primary ethical concern to the investigator.

- *Risk includes both risk of physical harm and emotional harm.*
- *By minimal risk, the standard means that participating in the experiment is no more risky than you would expect the person's daily life to be.*

Principle C: The investigator always retains the responsibility for insuring ethical practice in research.

- *Even though each of you actively runs the experiments, Dr. Clark-Foos is ultimately responsible for what you do. So keep in mind that the way you act during a session reflects on the lab as a whole.*

Principle D: Except in minimal risk research, the investigator establishes a clear and fair agreement with research participants, prior to their participation, that clarifies the obligations and responsibilities of each.

- *This is the principle that requires informed consent. Informed consent means that people are told as much about the experiment as is necessary for them to decide if they want to participate.*
- *Some populations (e.g. children) cannot offer informed consent on their own and consent must be granted by their guardian. Even in those cases though, they retain the independent right to refuse to participate.*

Principle E: Methodological requirements of a study may make the use of concealment or deception necessary. Before conducting such a study the investigator has a special responsibility to:

1. Determine if deception is justified by the study's possible scientific, educational or applied value
2. Determine whether alternative procedures are available that do not use concealment or deception
3. Insure that the participants are provided with sufficient explanation as soon as possible

Principle F: The experimenter respects the individual's freedom to decline to participate in or withdraw from the research at any time.

- *At any point after signing the consent form a subject can refuse to participate. If that happens, do not make any effort to convince the subject to participate. It is entirely their choice. If that happens you should give them 1/2 credit for every portion of a half hour they have participated.*

Principle G: Subjects should be informed of any risks posed by the experiment.

- *Risk can be physical or psychological. A statement concerning the risk posed by the experiment is included in every consent form.*

Principle H: After the data are collected the investigator provides participants with information about the nature of the study and attempts to remove any misconceptions that may have arisen.

- *Subjects should leave feeling good about themselves. Thus you should let them know that the tasks may be difficult or that their responses were not unusual if this seems to be a concern for them.*

Principle I: Where research procedures result in undesirable consequences for the individual participant the investigator has the responsibility to detect and remove or correct these consequences.

- *If for any reason someone reacts adversely in a study you are conducting you should inform Dr. Clark-Foos.*
- *If a student participant has any sort of complaint you should give them Dr. Clark-Foos's phone number and email address so that they can contact him. Do not try to resolve the issue yourself. Do not argue with the participant. Do not admit any fault. Simply indicate that you'll pass the complaint on to Dr. Clark-Foos and let them know that they too can contact Dr. Clark-Foos to discuss the matter.*

Principle J: Information obtained about the research participant during the course of an investigation is confidential unless otherwise agreed upon in advance.

- *Confidential means confidential. Under no circumstances should you reveal any information to anyone other than your group leader about the participants in your studies. Don't reveal their names. Don't reveal personal information about them. Don't reveal how they did or how they acted. Don't reveal anything to anyone other than your group leader. Failure to follow this principle is a breach of experimental ethics and will result in your expulsion from the lab and an F grade.*