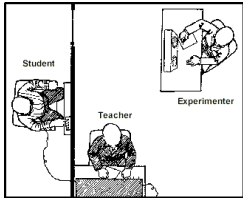


# Ways of Dealing with Ethical Issues



**This activity will help you to:**

- Consider ways of avoiding ethical problems in psychological research
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of different ways of avoiding ethical issues

Below are brief descriptions of some strategies for dealing with ethical issues. Working in small groups, you will each discuss one of the strategies in terms of its strengths and limitations. For your strategy, you need to consider:

- Will it prevent the abuse of pps in psychological research (why?)
- Why might it fail?
- How good a strategy is it overall?

## **Strategy 1 – leave it to the researcher**

The researcher is reminded that their research may raise ethical issues and problems, but it is left to the individual researcher to assess what these are and decided whether the research is justified in the light of these. It becomes solely the researcher's responsibility to regulate their own ethical conduct.

## **Strategy 2 – publish ethical guidelines that regulate the conduct of research**

The researcher's activity is limited by a set of guidelines published by their professional body that lay down in an unambiguous way what is and isn't allowed. Violation of the ethical guidelines can lead to disciplinary action by the professional body (e.g. the BPS), potentially leading to the psychologist losing their professional status.

## **Strategy 3 – form ethics committees**

The researcher must submit every research proposal to a committee in their university department. The committee, staffed by senior psychologists, decides whether the research meets the appropriate ethical standards (e.g. the BPS guidelines) and can disallow research or force changes to be made if it is ethically dubious

We will then have a discussion about these different strategies and try to draw some conclusions.