

# CULTURAL SAFETY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH WITH REFUGEES

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# Aim

- Considers issues of harm, vulnerability and voluntariness in the context culturally safe research with refugees

# Definition & origin of the concept of cultural safety

- *the effective practice of a professional from another culture which is determined/defined by those receiving the service*
- Therefore an outcome defined not by professionals but by those receiving services
  - Underpinned by:
    - a) recognising diversity of worldviews
    - b) recognising the impact of history (e.g. colonisation, in the NZ context)

application broad: ethnic groups, age or generation, gender, sexual orientation, occupation and socio economic status, ethnic original or *migrant experience*, religious or spiritual belief and disability.

- a guide to working with most vulnerable or marginalised groups

# Principles of Research Ethics



- Respect for Persons
- Beneficence/Non-Maleficence
- Justice/Non-Exploitation

# Respect for Persons

## ***Autonomy***

- Among other things individual:
  - Is unique and free;
  - Has the right and capacity to decide;

## ***Protection for vulnerable persons***

- Special protections must be in place for those whose decision-making capacity is impaired or diminished, whether due to physical or social factors

# Informed Consent

- *“therapeutic misconception”*
- After thinking seriously about the information, the person can arrive at a decision without being forced, threatened or offered something so valuable that free choice is impossible
  - *“coercion” and “undue inducement”*

# Justice/Non-Exploitation

- The principle that calls for ***fairness in the conduct of research*** is the principle of justice/non-exploitation
- Research must:
  - Provide special protection for vulnerable groups.

# Issues of Power

- Power imbalances exist across multiple lines: e.g. Urban vs Rural in Zimbabwe



# My interviewer is an insider...!

- The researcher may inadvertently transgress political, social, ... fault lines that exist within the group by unknowingly employing individuals who are members of a subgroup that has historically ... has hated ... (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003).

# vulnerability

- vulnerability refers to those persons who are relatively or absolutely unable to protect their own interests because :
- they have insufficient power, prowess, resources, strength, or other needed attributes to protect their own interests through negotiation for informed consent” (Loue, 2012).

# Funding sources as sources of vulnerability

- E.g. a research funded or conducted by NZ Immigration

# Hypothetical cases

- 1.....
- 2.....

# ‘They are all the same’

- Learning from ‘Sdumo’ a South African comedian
- Power relations in the context of Zimbabwe:  
Rural vs Urban

# “It’s all safe because I used community leaders!”

- *Hiding behind gate-keepers?*
- *Recruitment through a gatekeeper or community leader raises similar concerns of coercion and duress . The leader or gatekeeper may be able to exert influence or pressure on community members because of his or her relative power within the group; ...e.g. is a member of a subgroup that has historically held greater power. (P.117)*

# Cultural safety and recruitment and sampling issues

## □ Examples

- Pneumonia in NZ vs Pneumonia in countries where there is high HIV/AIDS prevalence

# Mitigating harm- Reviewing our protocols

- Special forms i.e. culturally appropriate and linguistically appropriate processes and forms



# References

- Jacobsen, K., & Landau, L. B. (2003). The dual imperative in refugee research: some methodological and ethical considerations in social science research on forced migration. *Disasters*, 27(3), 185-206.
- Loue, S. (2012). Ethical Issues in Research with Immigrants and Refugees. In *Encyclopedia of Immigrant Health* (pp. 113-124). Springer New York.