

Allied health 1

Sociology, Ethics



Michael Copenhagen Research Methods for the Health Professional — AH 4241 Section 001 6 February 2012 Questions for lecture 2/6/12

1. In a procedure described in Ch. 3 chapter (please feel free to review), participants are given false feedback about an unfavorable personality trait or low ability level. What are your reactions to this type of research? What are the ethical issues raised by using this procedure? Compare your reactions to that procedure with your reactions to an analogous one in which people are given false feedback that they possess a very favorable personality trait or a very high ability level. I feel that experimental deception should only be used as a last resort. I think that lying to a participant and telling them they have an unfavorable personality trait or low ability level can actually lead to emotional distress and do more harm than good. It can lower self esteem and bring out a quality that may not have presented itself otherwise. I think that the same can be said of experimenters lying about positive attributes. I think that a false confidence might present itself in the participant, thus yielding unnatural experimental results as well. Ethically, I think it is inappropriate to play with the mental state of any subject. Both experiments would ultimately lead to emotional distress by either (1) the subject feeling badly about the supposed "unfavorable" personality trait/ability level before debriefing or (2) the participant feeling badly upon debriefing and finding out the truth -- that they do not in fact possess the supposed "favorable" personality trait/ability level.

2. Dr. Alucard conducted a study to examine various aspects of the sexual behaviors of college students. The students filled out a questionnaire in a classroom on the campus. About 50 students were tested at one time.

The questionnaire asked about prior experiences with various sexual practices. If a student had experience, a number of other detailed follow-up questions were asked. However, if the student did not have any prior sexual experience, he or she skipped the detailed questions and simply went on to answer another general question about a sexual experience. What ethical issues arise when conducting research such as this? Do you detect any specific problems that might arise because of the "skip" procedure used in this study? I feel that this experiment failed ethically in regards to loss of privacy/confidentiality. Students with less sexual experience would ultimately skip more questions leading them to complete the questionnaire much faster than those with more sexual experience. This would lead to scrutiny and embarrassment among the class of peers. This point also leads to another problem with the study. Because of embarrassment, students might feel uncomfortable and thus fill out the questionnaire falsely. This dishonesty would occur in attempt to avoid feeling ostracized and therefore skew the results tremendously.