

Faculty of Education Research Ethics Training

14 August 2021



**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH & COMMUNITY-BASED
PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND ETHICS**

Schedule

- 09:00-10:00 Research and ethics: an introduction
- 10:00-10:20 Recruitment and remuneration
- *10:20-10:35 Break*
- 10:35-11:30 Informed consent and vulnerability
- *11:30-12:30 Break*
- 12:30-13:15 Qualitative research & Community-based participatory action research and ethics
- 13:15-14:00 Review process, risk-benefit ratio as well as research ethics and COVID-19
- 14:00-14:30 Ethical elements in research proposals
- 14:30-15:00 Questions and closing

Acknowledgement

*Greeff, M. & Towers, W. 2018. The Basics of Health Research Ethics.
[Unpublished presentation]*

Presentation by Prof. Mary Brydon-Miller.

**Would research ethics
for qualitative research
be different to
quantitative research?**

How?



Qualitative research

- Researchers use qualitative research methods to find out and understand ‘**how people think about the world and how they act and behave in it...[Understanding is] based on discourse, actions and documents**’.
- Individuals, organisations and communities and interactions between and among them may be seen as **socially constructed** and hence **dependent** on the **social context** in which they are found.

Qualitative research

- The **perspective** of the **researcher** thus adds to the knowledge construction as **observer**, **participant** (for some methodologies) and **analyst**.
- Consequently, qualitative researchers have specific criteria that are applied to determining the **credibility** and **trustworthiness** of their data (analogous to reliability and validity of quantitative data).

(DOH, 2015:74)

Methodological approaches and requirements

- Diversity of approaches (ethnography, PAR, etc.)
- Inductive understanding (not driven by theoretical framework)
- Dynamic, reflective and continuous research process (more contact with REC)
- Data collection and sample size (depth important rather than numbers; confidentiality?)

(DOH, 2015:74)

Approach to ethics review of qualitative research

- Qualitative research is inherently **dynamic** and may be based on assumptions that are **different** from those that inform quantitative research.
- Best practices, standards and expectations that may exist in the **different disciplines** must be considered.
- While researchers may refer to discipline- or paradigm-specific ethical norms and frameworks, adherence to **national research ethics guidance** is also required.

Approach to ethics review of qualitative research

- As in quantitative research, RECs must consider any ethical tensions arising from specific **methodologies** and **analytic approaches** competently, fairly and without prejudice.
- As in quantitative proposals, researchers should explain the intended **process** of the research, including its **predictability** or lack thereof, and how **foreseeable ethical issues** will be managed. This information must also appear in the information for potential participants.

(DOH, 2015:75)

Criteria for the review process

- Specific ethical issues may arise with:
 - gaining access
 - building rapport
 - conducting ethnographic observations, in-depth interviews and focus groups
 - using data and reporting results
- Attention should be given to issues of:
 - Consent
 - Confidentiality
 - Social and psychological harm
 - Privacy

(DOH, 2015:75)

Criteria for the review process

- Anticipated **relationships** between researchers and participants when assessing the design, review, conduct and reporting of the research
- Some ethical issues may be evident in the **design phase**, while others will only arise **during the research** (this still requires approval by the REC)

(DOH, 2015:75)

Criteria for the review process

- The researchers must exercise:
 - Discretion
 - Sound judgement
 - Consultation
 - Flexibility in accordance with the level of risk of harm and possible benefits
- The basis for exercise of discretion and the degree of flexibility should be considered at the design phase.
- The REC should be consulted when doubt arises.

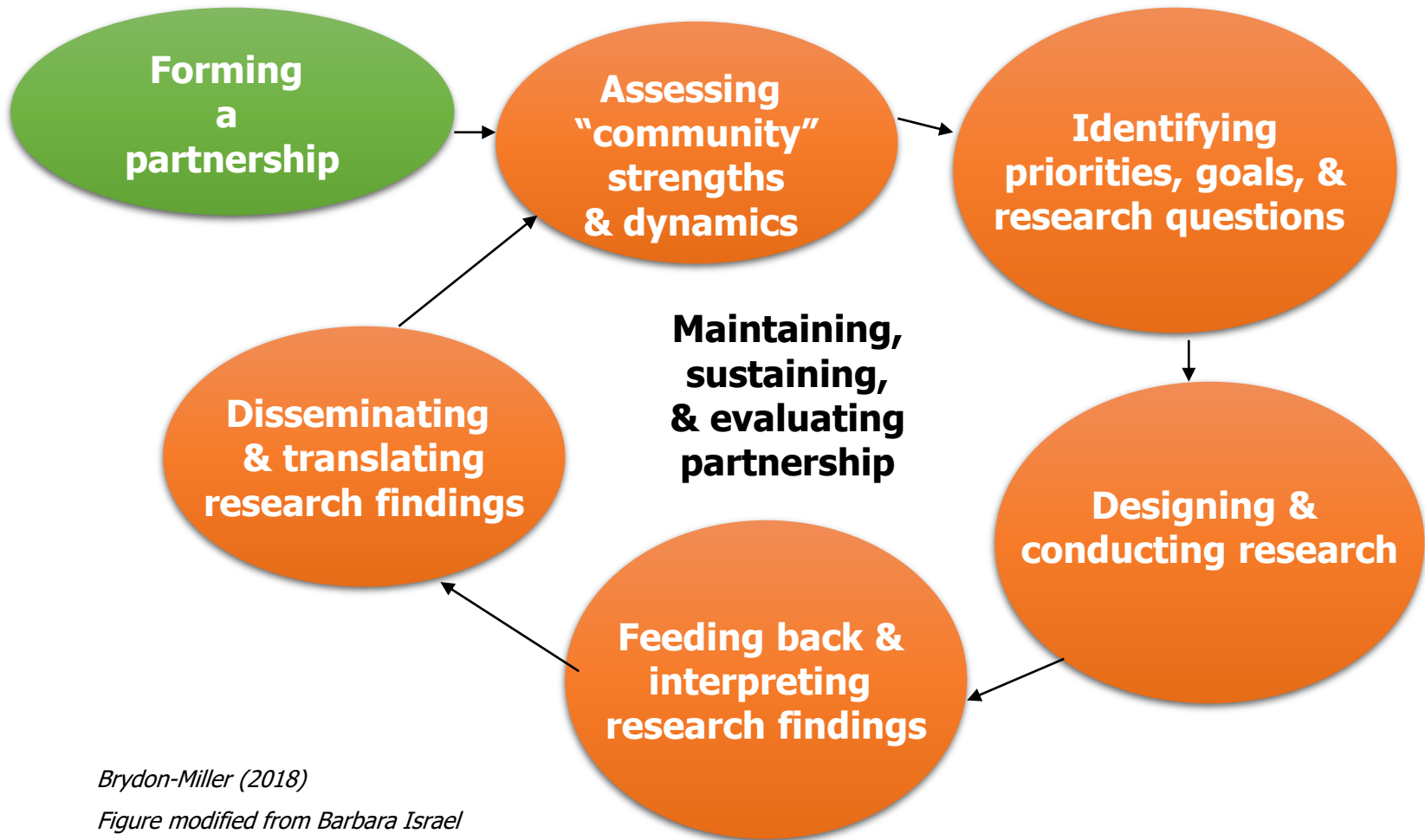
(DOH, 2015:75)

Community-based participatory action research and ethics

Participatory action research

- Participatory action research:
“...combines aspects of popular education, community-based research, and action for social change. Emphasizing collaboration within marginalized or oppressed communities, participatory action research works to address the underlying causes of inequality while at the same time focusing on finding solutions to specific community concerns”. (Williams & Brydon-Miller, 2004:245)

Stages of participatory action research



Brydon-Miller (2018)

Figure modified from Barbara Israel



*Should the
names of
research
participants
always be
omitted?*

Participatory action research

- Ownership of data
- Shared Values Stance
 - “...a respect for people and for the knowledge and experience they bring to the research process, a belief in the ability of democratic processes to achieve positive social change, and a commitment to action”
(Brydon-Miller *et al.*, 2003:15)

Ethical principles of community-based research

- Mutual respect
- Equality and inclusion
- Democratic participation
- Active learning
- Making a difference
- Collective action
- Personal integrity

(Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, 2012)

Translating covenantal ethics into practice

- Center yourself within a set of values
- Know your school, organizational, or community setting and participants
- Identify aspects and levels of power among stakeholders and in the larger research context
- Acknowledge your own interests...to yourself and others
- Anticipate ethical issues
- Be prepared to be surprised!

(Brydon-Miller, 2018)

Potential areas for ethical issues

- Partnership, collaboration and power
- Blurring the boundaries between researcher and researched, academic and activist
- Community rights, conflict and democratic representation
- Ownership, dissemination and impact of data, findings and publications
- Anonymity, privacy and confidentiality
- Institutional ethical review processes
- Social action and social change

(Brydon-Miller, 2018)



Questions?