

## Ethical dilemmas

For each of the scenarios, is there an ethical problem? Rate the degree to which you feel there is or is not an ethical problem with each of the scenarios by using the numbers on the following scale. If you think there is an ethical problem, how could it be corrected or avoided?

Definitely not a problem      1      2      3      4      5      Definitely a problem

\_\_\_1. Researchers study the effects of self-esteem on cognitive dissonance. To manipulate self-esteem, the researchers have students take a test which supposedly measures important social skills. Half of the participants are told that they've failed the test, whereas the other half are told they performed well. In reality, none of the tests are graded. At the end of the study, the researchers explain the deception to the participants.

\_\_\_2. A high school math teacher who is working on his Masters degree wants to examine whether students do better when he has them try to work through problems on their own before he explains what method they should use. He teaches two 10<sup>th</sup> grade classes—in one he has them struggle for 20 minutes before he explains how to approach the problem, and in the other, he explains the technique first. He compares test scores on their midterm.

\_\_\_3. Male college students are told that they are participating in a study on communication and that they will be chatting online with another participant about randomly chosen photographs. In reality, the pictures are all of women, and the other "participant" (who is actually in on the study) either says sexual things about them (e.g., "boy, she looks like she wants it) or not. Then the men complete a rape myth acceptance measure. The study is really examining whether the conversation will affect their attitudes (or expression of attitudes).

\_\_\_4. A political scientist is interested in whether sharing information about what their neighbors do affects voting behavior. She sends postcards to people living within a city letting them know which of their neighbors did or did not vote in the last election (public information) or just reminding them of the election.

\_\_\_5. An athletic trainer wants to know if massage will help reduce muscle soreness. She has twenty athletes from the volleyball team lift a weight to exhaustion. They are asked not to stretch, take any painkillers, or get a massage for a week (the duration of the study). All the participants come back at days 2, 4, and 7 to report on their pain. Half of them receive a massage each time and half of them do not.

\_\_\_6. A social work student wants to examine the attitudes of recent Somali refugees to living in Iowa. Because most of the group she wants to interview do not yet speak English, she speaks to them through an interpreter. One of her questions asks about how their children are adjusting to the move and what they do when their children act out.

\_\_\_7. A researcher interviews women who have recently experienced domestic assault. He receives their names from an agency that works with the women, some of whom are still living with their abuser, and calls them to see if they would like to participate. If so, he arranges an interview in a public place such as a coffee shop or park.