

# Ethical Considerations for User Research and Service Design

Reflective cards



# Safety

Ensure the physical and emotional safety of staff and people. This includes respecting people's privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity whilst reducing the risk of causing further harm and trauma.



# Safety

Ensure the physical and emotional safety of staff and people. This includes respecting people's privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity whilst reducing the risk of causing further harm and trauma.



# Safety

Ensure the physical and emotional safety of staff and people. This includes respecting people's privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity whilst reducing the risk of causing further harm and trauma.








## How to use the cards?

Use these cards to reflect about how to conduct engagement activities in an ethical and meaningful way reducing the risk of causing harm and trauma.

- Start with selecting a theme
- Use the cards from that theme to reflect on the different phases of the engagement: before, during and after.

## Themes

-  Safety
-  Trust and transparency
-  Choice
-  Collaboration
-  Empowerment

### Before the engagement

## Identify and recruit people safely

When preparing the recruitment process, take time to think about the safest and most considerate way to approach the people you're trying to recruit.

- What is the best way to approach people so they feel safe?
- What is the best way to approach people in order to prevent further harm or trauma?



### Before the engagement

## Consider how the format or setting of the engagement can impact the potential for harm or discomfort

Be adaptable when delivering your engagement activities in order to best accommodate people's needs.

**Consider the format or location of your engagement** – some topics may not be appropriate to discuss in shared spaces, such as focus groups or pop-up research.

### Before the engagement

## Consider who you are engaging with and develop safety frameworks

People may have experienced differing degrees of risk and harm, depending on personal circumstances, characteristics or backgrounds. There may be occasions when you do research with vulnerable people that require extra care.

**Develop safety frameworks**, for example consider what to do in case of serious disclosure and read any relevant documents before your engagement e.g. Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.



# Safety

Ensure the physical and emotional safety of staff and people. This includes respecting people's privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity whilst reducing the risk of causing further harm and trauma.



# Safety

Ensure the physical and emotional safety of staff and people. This includes respecting people's privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity whilst reducing the risk of causing further harm and trauma.



# Safety

Ensure the physical and emotional safety of staff and people. This includes respecting people's privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity whilst reducing the risk of causing further harm and trauma.



# Safety

Ensure the physical and emotional safety of staff and people. This includes respecting people's privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity whilst reducing the risk of causing further harm and trauma.



## Before the engagement

### Consider how to best safeguard people

When engaging with people, we must safeguard them. It is important you know the right protocols to follow ahead of the engagement, in the case that you need to escalate a safeguarding concern.

- Familiarise yourself with the contact details of the appropriate safeguarding lead for your users.
- Create a risk log in a restricted location to record risks you identify as you plan engagements.



## During the engagement

### Watch for signs of distress and respond accordingly

Watch for signs of potential changes in effect, both verbal or nonverbal, and respond in a way that acknowledges and validates the person's experience, offering options for support, and allow the person to take the lead.

Be wary of signs of people being upset, for instance they might avoid the question or become agitated. Be ready to take steps to minimise harm, such as rephrasing the question, taking breaks, or reiterating that they do not have to answer questions if they do not want to.



## During the engagement

### Collecting and processing data ethically and legally

Make sure you are collecting and processing data legally and looking after the physical and psychological safety of everyone.

Review your organisation's policies and governance structures in order to both store and access data securely.

- What steps are you taking to align your data collection, storage and processing to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)?
- Do you need to carry out a Data Protection Impact Assessment?



## After the engagement

### Pause and look after yourself

Take a short break and give yourself space to think and process. Listening actively can be tiring and engagement might involve difficult conversations and topics. Look after yourself.

Hold regular team debriefs and wellness checks for the team to discuss their personal experiences with the engagements, vent, and if necessary surface the need to receive supportive counselling or other resources.



# Trust

Build trust by communicating clearly and effectively with people, staff and stakeholders. Being clear about expectations helps minimise the unknown and the anxiety it might induce.



# Trust

Build trust by communicating clearly and effectively with people, staff and stakeholders. Being clear about expectations helps minimise the unknown and the anxiety it might induce.



# Trust

Build trust by communicating clearly and effectively with people, staff and stakeholders. Being clear about expectations helps minimise the unknown and the anxiety it might induce.



# Trust

Build trust by communicating clearly and effectively with people, staff and stakeholders. Being clear about expectations helps minimise the unknown and the anxiety it might induce.



## Before the engagement

### Take time to set expectations clearly so people know what to expect

Help people understand what to expect, describing what the engagement activity will look like, who is there, how long it will last, how their data will be used, and other information to help minimise the unknown and the anxiety it might induce.

Also share engagement questions in advance in order to reduce anxiety and specify if there is any preparation needed.



## During the engagement

### Take time to properly welcome people and ask for consent

Recap and outline what will happen during the engagement, reviewing information about expectations and outcomes.

Provide people with options and ask for consent: allowing them to choose preferred ways of recording the conversation i.e video, audio, note-taking.



## Before the engagement

### Use simple language to make it easier for people to understand

**Describe your project in clear and accessible language to stripping out complex details** and focus on what everyone needs to know in order to understand what is expected from them, how data is going to be collected, accessed or how you're using people's information.

> Write for a maximum reading age of 9, even if you are writing for a specialist audience.

> Run your content through readability software that uses an automated readability index. Can you score a Grade Level of 8 or lower?



## During the engagement

### Capture notes visibly to reduce anxiety

Being the subject of an engagement activity can leave people feeling anxious and nervous about their contribution.

Agree with the person how you will take notes to reduce their anxiety and make them more comfortable

Share any notes or recorded media with the person so they can sense check or correct anything before using them



# Trust

Build trust by communicating clearly and effectively with people, staff and stakeholders. Being clear about expectations helps minimise the unknown and the anxiety it might induce.



# Choice

Make participation voluntary and make sure people understand their rights, their power to withdraw and have a voice in the decision-making process.



# Choice

Make participation voluntary and make sure people understand their rights, their power to withdraw and have a voice in the decision-making process.



# Choice

Make participation voluntary and make sure people understand their rights, their power to withdraw and have a voice in the decision-making process.



## After the engagement

### Continue updating people on project progress

Let people know how the project is progressing and how their expertise and experience has been used throughout the different phases of the project.

Continue sharing and sense-checking outputs with people throughout the project if possible.



## Before the engagement

### Give options so people have the power to choose

Accommodate different options to give people the choice of what feels safest and most convenient to them. Ask if they prefer to engage with you online, over the phone, or in a public space.

Ask if there is anything that can be done or put into place to make the conversation more comfortable or feel more supportive. For example, by using an interpreter or meeting in an accessible venue.



## Before the engagement

### Reflect on your role as the engagement facilitator

Reflect on your role and recognise and name work that makes you feel uncomfortable or upset for any reason.

#### Are you the right person to be carrying out this work?

- If so, consider how you will keep yourself well during the project.
- If not, have a conversation with someone about taking a different role. Can you support the team doing this work indirectly? Or should you focus on something else entirely?



## During the engagement

### Take time to review and make sure people understand their rights

Go over their rights, data sharing and confidentiality to ensure that people understand how they can exercise their rights, by emphasising their choice, autonomy, and control over what they decide to share.

- What measures will you take to keep peoples' information confidential? You may use techniques such as anonymisation or pseudonymisation .
- Who has access to personal data?
- How will personal data be reused for future research, educational, or communication purposes?





# Choice

Make participation voluntary and make sure people understand their rights, their power to withdraw and have a voice in the decision-making process.

# Choice

Make participation voluntary and make sure people understand their rights, their power to withdraw and have a voice in the decision-making process.



# Choice

Make participation voluntary and make sure people understand their rights, their power to withdraw and have a voice in the decision-making process.

# Collaboration

Acknowledge everyone's role in designing services that reflect needs and preferences, including people who have experience of using services and people who deliver them



## During the engagement

### Make sure people know they can withdraw participation at any point

Remind people that their participation is voluntary and they can withdraw at anytime without giving a reason, and that participation or non-participation will not influence their current care or access to services.

- If people decide to participate and later choose to withdraw, any contributions they've made (such as comments, stories, videos, or other) should be deleted from the records and not used.



## After the engagement

### Arrange and make available agreed incentives as soon as possible

People's circumstances and situations can be difficult, and your activity incentive might make a difference at certain times e.g remuneration of expenses. Process incentives right after the interview with clear instruction on how to use them.

Once again, remember to provide clear guidance on the incentive using simple language.



## During the engagement

### Offer incentives that fit peoples' needs

Consider who you are engaging with and the best incentive method for them.

- Are they struggling with cost of living? If so, consider budget-friendly incentives methods that have partnerships with low-cost providers.
- Are they struggling with mental health? If so, choose a incentive method that doesn't provide many options so people don't feel overwhelmed with all the options available.



## Before the engagement

### Consider your project's purpose and plan your engagement accordingly

Reflect on the purpose of your engagement and who you are planning to engage with. Carefully reflect on who you are inviting to the activity and if they are the 'right' people based on your selected recruitment criteria.

- Are the people who will be most impacted involved in your project planning? If not, why not?
- If you're having difficulties recruiting, have you considered reaching out to people in a different way e.g. via voluntary sector?



# Collaboration

Acknowledge everyone's role in designing services that reflect needs and preferences, including people who have experience of using services and people who deliver them



# Collaboration

Acknowledge everyone's role in designing services that reflect needs and preferences, including people who have experience of using services and people who deliver them



# Collaboration

Acknowledge everyone's role in designing services that reflect needs and preferences, including people who have experience of using services and people who deliver them



# Collaboration

Acknowledge everyone's role in designing services that reflect needs and preferences, including people who have experience of using services and people who deliver them



## Before the engagement

### Build rapport with people

Invest time in building relationships with people before the engagement by confirming they understand their participation is voluntary, making sure they understand their rights and what is being asked from them.

- Have an informal conversation in advance of engagement activities.
- So as not to overwhelm people, all communications should be with the same team member.



## During the engagement

### Give participant's time to ask questions, make suggestions and provide feedback

In an engagement activity time is often limited, make sure to set some time aside for participant's to provide their feedback, ask any questions about the project and make suggestions.

Consider ways of getting feedback after the engagement.



## Before the engagement

### Consider your 'blind spots'

Consider the experiences and lives of people that are different to you so your work is as inclusive, accessible and safe as possible.

- What are your beliefs or assumptions about the topic you'll be addressing?
- Do you share anything in common with the people you plan to engage?



## After the engagement

### Be respectful of peoples' time and availability

Thank the people involved for their time and ensure they understand how their experiences will feed into the work. Let them know what will happen next, how they will receive incentive if agreed and how they will be updated about progress.

After the engagement let participant's know how the project is progressing and how their expertise and experience has been used.



# Empowerment

Empower people and staff by demonstrating their experiences are recognised and used in the decision-making process.



# Empowerment

Empower people and staff by demonstrating their experiences are recognised and used in the decision-making process.



# Empowerment

Empower people and staff by demonstrating their experiences are recognised and used in the decision-making process.



# Empowerment

Empower people and staff by demonstrating their experiences are recognised and used in the decision-making process.



## Before the engagement

### Recruit people inclusively

Consider developing an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and building what you learn from undertaking an EQIA into your recruitment plans.

- How are you planning to reach those who are seldom heard?
- What steps have you taken to make sure that your planned communications, activities and forms accessible?
- What will you need to do to communicate and engage effectively with diverse user groups?



## Before the engagement

### Think about your power, privilege and position

Power differentials can prevent people from working together in meaningful ways. Take time to think about your power, privilege and position in relation to the people you plan to engage and in relation to the subject you are engaging about.

- Consider what strategies you could use to reduce the power imbalances among staff and people before, during and after the engagement.



## Before the engagement

### Pause and reflect about your positionality

Positionality describes how your identity influences and biases your understanding of the world, which impacts how you plan and carry out your engagement.

**Think about the power you hold.** Power is the ability to bring about a change in the lives of others.

**Reflect about privilege you have.** Privilege is a special right, advantage or immunity available only to a particular person or group.



## During the engagement

### Don't expect people to recall memories in sequential ways

People may have trouble remembering their past experiences in the order of how things happened and that might cause added anxiety. Instead, invite them to share however much or little they remember, in whichever way they remember it.

You can also use tools/artefacts to support the conversation and help people recall memories in the order of how things happened e.g. emotional touchpoints, photos, diary studies.



# Empowerment

Empower people and staff by demonstrating their experiences are recognised and used in the decision-making process.



# Empowerment

Empower people and staff by demonstrating their experiences are recognised and used in the decision-making process.



# Ethical Considerations for User Research and Service Design

Reflective cards



# Ethical Considerations for User Research and Service Design

Reflective cards



## After the engagement

### Provide information on where to get help or support

Where you identify someone might benefit, share national or local-based information on where to get advice, help or support, for example around money matters, food, housing, and physical or mental health.








### How to use the cards?

Use these cards to reflect about how to conduct engagement activities in an ethical and meaningful way reducing the risk of causing harm and trauma.

- Start with selecting a theme
- Use the cards from that theme to reflect on the different phases of the engagement: before, during and after.

### Themes

-  Safety
-  Trust and transparency
-  Choice
-  Collaboration
-  Empowerment

## During the engagement

### Practice empathy and active listening

Practice active listening by being fully present, being respectful, and ensuring that people felt heard through body language and verbal affirmations, welcoming silence, and restating what was said and contributed.

Practice constant attention, caring awareness, sensitivity and remember that some topics of conversation might cause upset to some people.








### How to use the cards?

Use these cards to reflect about how to conduct engagement activities in an ethical and meaningful way reducing the risk of causing harm and trauma.

- Start with selecting a theme
- Use the cards from that theme to reflect on the different phases of the engagement: before, during and after.

### Themes

-  Safety
-  Trust and transparency
-  Choice
-  Collaboration
-  Empowerment