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Dealing with “normal” misbehavior in science: Is gossip enough?

As scientists, whether in the natural or social sciences, we tend to be confident in the self-policing abilities of our disciplines to root out unethical behavior. In many countries, we have institutionalized procedures for dealing with egregious forms of misconduct in the forms of fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism (FFP).

But [research](#) is increasingly [calling attention](#) to more “everyday” forms of misconduct—modes of irresponsible (if not unethical) behavior, pertaining to how we conduct our research as well as our relationships with colleagues. These include, for example:

- cutting corners and being sloppy in one’s research (which makes future replication

difficult)

- delaying reviews of a colleague's work in order to beat them to publication
- exploiting students
- unfairly claiming authorship credit
- misusing research funds
- sabotaging colleagues, and so on.

Such behaviors don't violate FFP, but nevertheless fall short of the professional standards we aspire to. They begin to shape the implicit norms we internalize about what it takes to become successful in our fields (i.e., the formal script may be that we are to give others their due credit, but "really" we know that winners need to play dirty). Further, such actions can foster experiences of injustice and exploitation that lead some of us to leave our professions altogether. They thus compromise the integrity of scientific research and can create the climate for more serious violations to occur..

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Ethics and the Participation of Indigenous Children and Young People in Research

Indigenous children and young people's participation in social research raises a range of ethical issues that researchers and participants must grapple with prior to and throughout the research process. These issues include for example, matters to do with protocols for seeking consent, ensuring the research process is culturally respectful and age appropriate, whether the research environment and methods used are child friendly and participants can freely express their views, and ensuring the research endeavour is mutually beneficial.

In Australia, all research involving Indigenous children and young people must be guided by, and adhere to the principles articulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* ('*National Statement*'), particularly chapter 4.2 of that Statement. If the research is health related it must comply with the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research* ('*NHMRC Values and Ethics Guidelines*'). These documents instruct researchers about how to undertake research in an ethically sound manner, and the principles they contain are fundamental to the manner in which Australian ethics committees assess human research applications. Additionally, the *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies* ('*AIATSIS Guidelines*') are particularly instructive and helpful and are becoming more widely used by researchers and ethics committees alike.

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