

# Key Points if Undertaking Research

- ✓ Think about what it is you wish to know or explore further – develop and refine your research question (in discussion with colleagues, peers, tutors and a research supervisor)
- ✓ Are you keeping a research journal? (so that you can trace your own thinking and responses as the research journey unfolds: this is particularly relevant when undertaking qualitative research where research reflexivity is important)
- ✓ Find out if others have already researched your area of interest, and if they have, what they have found (by searching the available literature using academic search engines, such as PsychINFO and Web of Science, as well as other sources, such as Google Scholar, reference lists in key texts, Internet)
- ✓ Consider how you intend to ask your question(s) (read texts on methodology, considering whether qualitative or quantitative methods best suit your question)
- ✓ Consider ethics (what are the ethical implications for your study, e.g., if interviewing participants how will you ensure they give informed consent to be involved, how can they withdraw, how can you protect their anonymity etc.? Also, if you need to obtain ethics consent from an organisation [such as the NHS or a university/college], make sure that it is successfully completed before you begin to collect data)
- ✓ Think about how you will collect data (questionnaires, interviews, tools and measures, other written information, such as newspaper reports etc.) Do you need to ‘pilot’ your data collection methods before you use them, i.e., try them out first and refine them accordingly?
- ✓ Have you prepared suitable information for participants to fully and clearly explain the purpose and scope of your study (so that they can decide whether or not they wish to be involved)
- ✓ Are you clear about how you will analyse your data, ensuring you do this systematically and critically (keeping a clear ‘audit trail’ of how you developed your results/findings)
- ✓ Have you critically reflected on your results/findings in the light of existing literature? (Does your study say something new, or is it contradicting or affirming previous research?)
- ✓ Presenting your study (how will you disseminate your findings: in written form, as a poster or conference presentation, an academic article, an article for a professional magazine, a training DVD or web resource?)
- ✓ Have you, at all times, consulted with your research supervisor, or another person you have identified to support and guide you through the process of research? (This step needs to be embedded throughout your research process.).