

Possibly Incompetent Adult

Category: Social Science, Survey Study

Roles:

- Researcher
- Potential Participant

Background Information:

The Program for Socially Acceptable Research (PSAR) is conducting a survey of community residents to assess attitudes about current politicians. Because it is supported by the AARP, at least half of respondents need to be over age 55. Screening for inclusion and exclusion criteria occurs early in the telephone interview; if there is more than one adult in the household then the protocol calls for surveying the oldest household member. Informed consent is obtained before the survey commences.

Researcher:

I work for a respected and efficient telephone survey firm. I enjoy my work because I like talking to people. The only thing I don't like about my job is that there is a lot of pressure to get the survey completed as quickly as possible - both by "converting" non-responders to responders and by getting through the questions quickly. While going through the introduction and screening questions, the elderly man I am speaking with keeps referring to President Eisenhower. I'm not sure if he is hard of hearing, or perhaps cognitively impaired.

Potential Participant:

A young whippersnapper called saying that he is conducting a survey of community residents to assess attitudes about current politicians. He asked to speak to the oldest household member which would be me. I suppose that should be expected, seeing how I am considered "elderly."

I am perfectly happy to answer this person's questions, but I wish s/he would stop mumbling and speak up. Also, I don't know why anyone wants to know what I think about the city council. Everyone knows there has not been a politician worth his salt since Eisenhower. I'm a little suspicious that this is being done for some political reason, but hey, it's a free country. I can always refuse to answer a question if I think it's leading.

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NOTE: you consider yourself completely able to make decisions for yourself, You are very hard of hearing and you have very slight memory difficulty which you'd deny if asked.

Imagine you are the potential participant and that you will need, at the conclusion of your exchange with the researcher, to decide whether or not to participate. Which decision you make is up to you.