

Video 3 transcript: Scenario 2: Aicha

Aicha is from a Muslim background and is studying for a Masters in Sociology at a New Zealand university. As part of her research project, she has decided to gain a better understanding of the subtle discrimination that Muslim employees experience at work.

Being from a Muslim background herself, she feels comfortable and confident to design her own survey which includes a section with the Information Sheet and Consent details, and to distribute it among various Facebook pages.

Her Information Sheet contains information about herself; the purpose of the research; how many sections are in the survey and how long it will take; as well as information about how and when participants can withdraw; and where and for how long their data will be stored.

What are some potential ethical risks associated with this project?

Given that the experience of discrimination can lead to trauma and sensitivity, responding to a survey which collects information about one's experiences of discrimination might be unsettling for some, and may arouse negative feelings in the respondents. Aicha hasn't considered any type of support for her participants should they experience this.

Given that some estimates place the Muslim community in New Zealand at less than 1.5%, the sample size would be relatively small. In such cases, the likelihood of identifying people based on their experiences rises, as community members may have insights regarding the experiences of others around them. It is therefore important to employ extra sensitivity in ensuring anonymity is provided for participants in the project.

Aicha is from a Muslim background and therefore assumes that she is the best person to know whether her survey questions are culturally appropriate or not. While the student researcher is from a Muslim background, the Muslim community is very diverse and therefore what might be appropriate wording for one group might be offensive to another.

To address these ethical issues and mitigate the risks, Aicha has decided firstly to provide in the Information Sheet a link and contact details to a free support service, for example the Human Rights Commission or Employment Assistance Programme.

She will also clearly and transparently articulate in the Information Sheet that some participants may experience negative feelings from responding to the survey questions.

Aicha will make sure that it is clear in the Information Sheet that the survey responses are anonymous and will take extra care when sharing the comments of Muslims from areas where only a few people have responded.

Lastly, Aicha has decided to have some Muslim leaders check her survey questions, Information Sheet and Consent Form to ensure that they are culturally appropriate.