Making research ethnically inclusive:
Our commitments

community
research

Our commitments

At Community Research, our by-line is 'Bringing the voices of communities into the heart of organisations'.

Of course, we do not mean just white communities, or those who make up the majority. We want our clients to hear from a diversity of communities and to represent different views and experiences, including from people who are from minority, marginalised and under-represented groups.

We have created this set of commitments to make our own research more ethnically and racially inclusive. These include general commitments about how we work, and specific commitments at each stage of the research process.

This is a living document. We welcome feedback on how we can make our research better, particularly from people from diverse and under-represented groups.

1. General principles

In all our work, we commit to:

- Promoting an **open, learning attitude:**
  - Educating ourselves about our own biases, privilege and blind spots;
  - Discussing ideas, sources, sharing others' experiences, challenging and supporting each other to learn more about disadvantage, structural racism and discrimination, symbolism and terminology;
  - Applying reflective practice, where we reflect on experiences, lessons and feedback about race and inclusivity.

- **Acting as advocates** for racial and ethnic inclusivity – challenging racism, spreading the message, and promoting opportunities for people from under-represented groups to get involved in research as a participant, and as a career.

- Looking for opportunities where we can support people from under-represented groups to **enter the profession and thrive**.
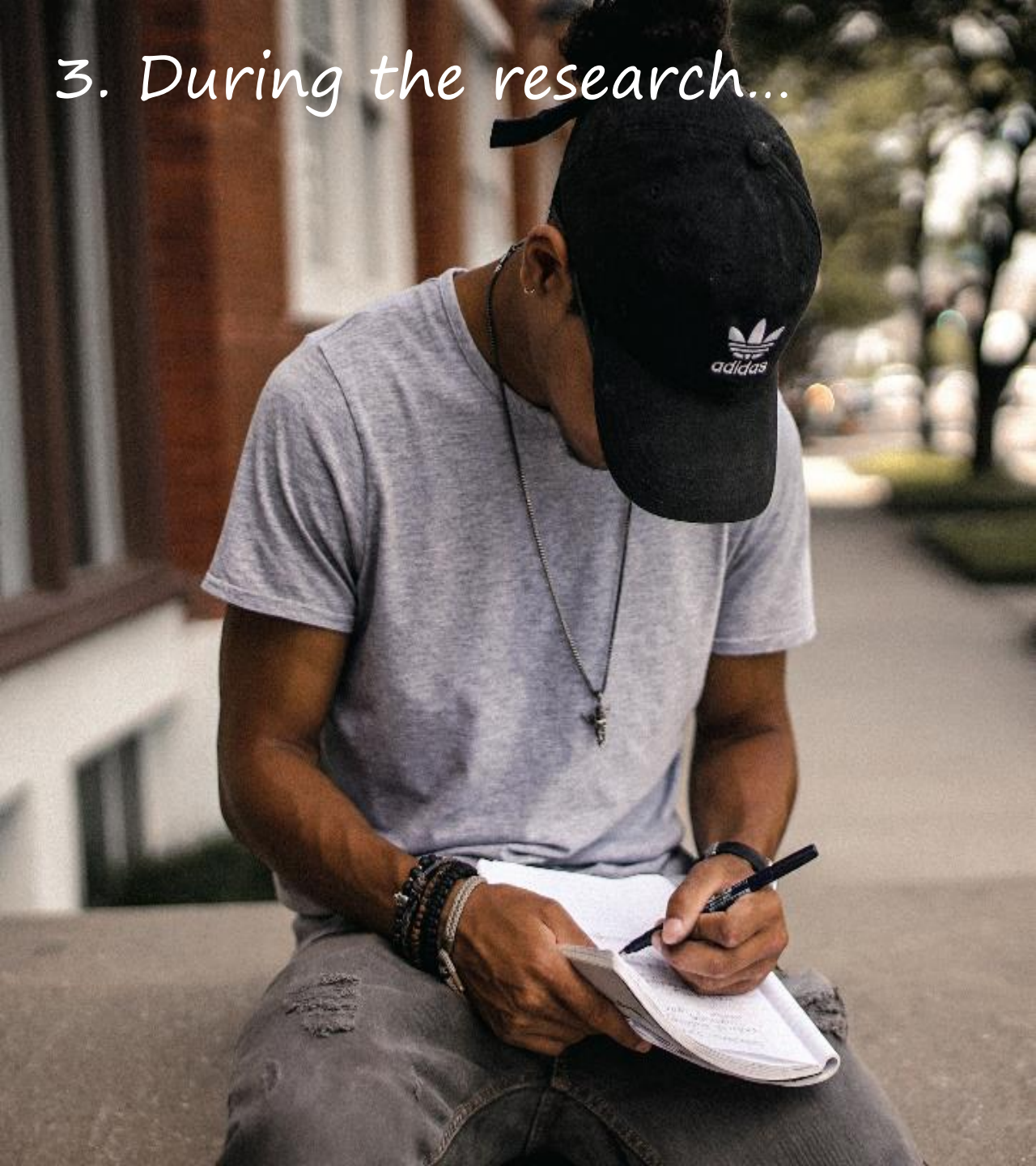
2. At the start of projects...

We commit to:

- Prompting clients to **consider under-represented people and communities** whose needs and experiences may differ from the majority of the population.

- Challenging any **brief, sweeping references** to under-represented people (e.g. 'vulnerable'; 'BAME') and avoiding research that is tokenistic or ticking boxes.

- If diverse perspectives cannot be properly included, **we will not support research** that pretends to do this, or covers off diverse ethnic groups with inadequate samples.

- Offering to help clients **analyse** who might be disproportionately disadvantaged in their area of interest. In particular, to consider:

  - The purpose of research and outputs, and identifying any groups that might have unequal access/ experiences/ outcomes ('detriment').

  - The size of the sample we need to ensure we can gather robust data from specific under-represented groups.

- Being clear about **reasons for not including** certain people, groups and communities either at all, or in substantial numbers.

- Considering whether we need to bring in others with the '**cultural competence**' to help us design an approach that is accessible and relevant to people in under-represented groups.

3. During the research...

We commit to:

- **Challenging and excluding racist behaviour** in research settings. This is rare, but where it happens, we have a 'no tolerance' policy and will take an actively anti-racist position.
- Recognising that **we may not always be the right people** to interview or facilitate groups with people from under-represented groups and communities, because:
  - They may find it hard to trust and open up to us as moderators if we do not share their ethnic and cultural background;
  - We may not know the best way of framing questions to be relevant;
  - We may miss cultural nuances, references and signals.
- And where this is the case:
  - Involving a moderator/ interviewer of **similar background** to the participants;
  - Considering **peer researcher and participant advisory group approaches** – co-designing approach and involvement in analysis.
- Including specific questions in evaluation feedback about the extent to which people felt included, heard, and understood.

4. In reporting our research...

We commit to...

- Recognising we have a **duty to raise awareness** amongst our audiences and to promote respectful and accurate language and terminology.

- Ensuring the voices of under-represented people are **clearly heard** in our research outputs.

- **Accurately reporting** the experiences and views of people from under-represented groups:

  - Acknowledging sample sizes may be too small for us to get a representative picture of a community. We will set out any limitations of sample size, including who has not been heard.

  - Recognising the danger of confirmation bias and misinterpretation due to our own viewpoints and unconscious bias.

  - Involving people from minority groups in interpretation of the analysis and interpretation where there is a danger of us misinterpreting findings or missing nuance.

- **Avoiding aggregation** of minority ethnic groups together. We will seek to distinguish specific ethnic groups in our analysis.

Talk to us…

This is just a start!

We welcome conversations about how we can make our work and your research more racially inclusive.

We want to make changes, and we want to help others to make changes, so please drop us a line to share your thoughts and start a discussion.

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