There is a lack of sufficient empirical research investigating how research ethics is transferred from faculty to student within the context of a research mentoring relationship. This gap is troubling given the presumption that the majority of students’ knowledge about ethical research practice occurs in the context of this informal relationship. Consequently, we conducted a qualitative study of factors related to research ethics within the faculty – student research mentoring relationship. Utilizing a purposeful sampling technique, the mentor and assistant will identify six faculty members who are currently or have previously experienced working with undergraduate students – particularly students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups – on research projects. A semi-structured interviewing protocol will address three overlapping research questions: First, how do faculty mentors define their own ethical orientations? Second, how is ethical decision-making done in mentors day-to-day research and other professional activities? Finally, how do these two factors inform the dynamics of the faculty mentor-undergraduate mentee relationship, particularly with students from diverse backgrounds? In the context of this larger study I specifically addressed another question: How can protective guidelines-boundaries work effectively to contribute to the relational process of the mentor-mentee relationship? A combination of theoretical perspectives will be used to ground our analysis. Constructivist, ethno-methodological, and symbolic interactive orientations will allow us to gain a greater understanding of the symbolic interactions that give meaning to faculty mentors’ understanding of proper research ethics within the mentor-mentee relationship.

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