Developing a 'Code of Practice' (research ethics)

With permission, the following exercise is based on materials from the Community Research Toolkit – empowering communities to bring lasting change. Written and illustrated by Andy Whittet, Anne McGreechin, Bill Crooks and Jackie Mouradian and produced by Faith in Communities Scotland – Transformation Team 2010.

Purpose – This is an exercise to use with groups for encouraging discussion about their attitudes and principles for research practice and for developing their own Code of Practice.

Preparation:
- Copy the pictures on the following pages and cut to create sets of 8 picture cards. One set per group.
- Copy the last page as a supporting handout for discussion.

Exercise (In small groups)

1. Each group sorts the pictures into what they consider to be images of positive and negative attitudes. Think about:
   o What are the reasons for your choices?
   o Are there some images that can be seen as both positive and negative?
   o Which figure is the community researcher?
2. As a whole group discuss each picture in turn exploring the decisions that were made and why.
   o It is a good idea to let each group take a different picture and to present their ideas to the whole group.
   o Make sure that you check with other groups about their interpretations – they may be similar and/or different.
   o Use these discussions to draw out different aspects of a research code of practice or ethics for example: safety issues for the research participants and for community researchers.
3. Share handout 'Positive Attitudes'
   o How are our points similar?
   o Have we missed anything or identified additional points?
   o What do you think will be the challenges for being a community researcher?
4. Following the exercise and discussion:
   o Make a list (on a flip chart) of the points that the group want to include in their 'Code of Practice'.
   o Some points can be grouped together under a heading such as: positive skills and attitudes – openness, non-judgemental, active listening etc.
   o If it does not arise, make sure that confidentiality, anonymity and consent are discussed.
5. Finally, copy out the list so that you can refer to it in the future.

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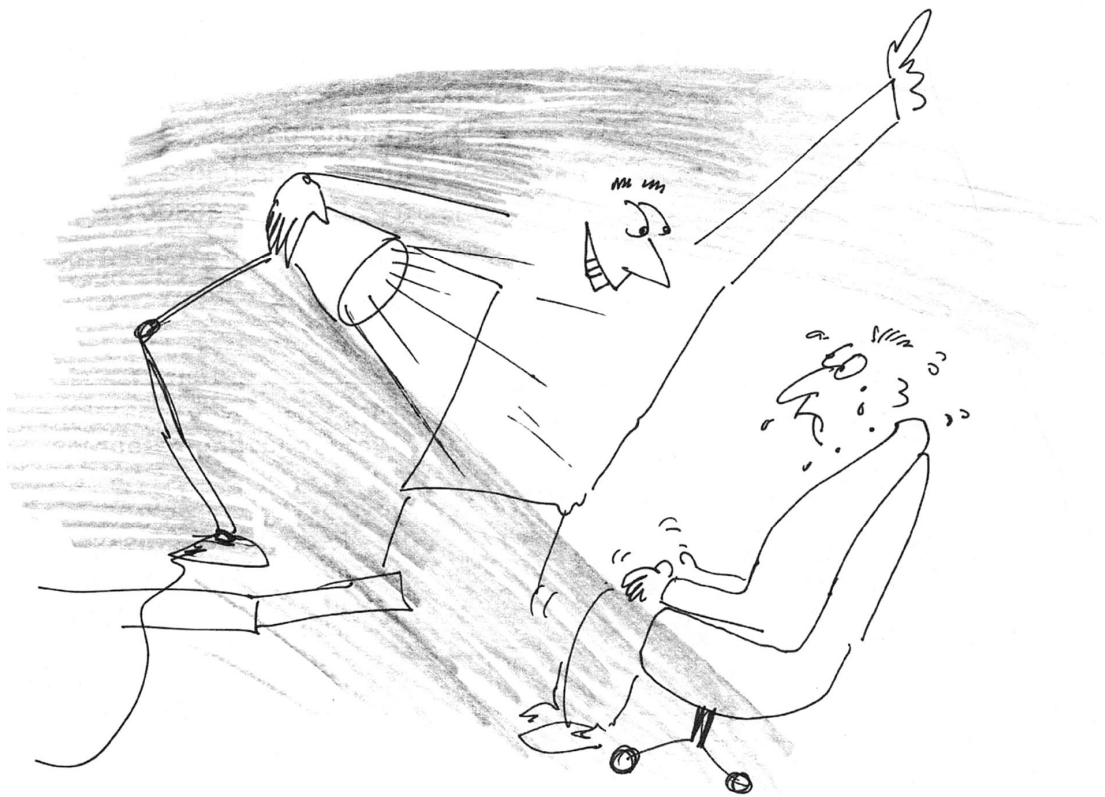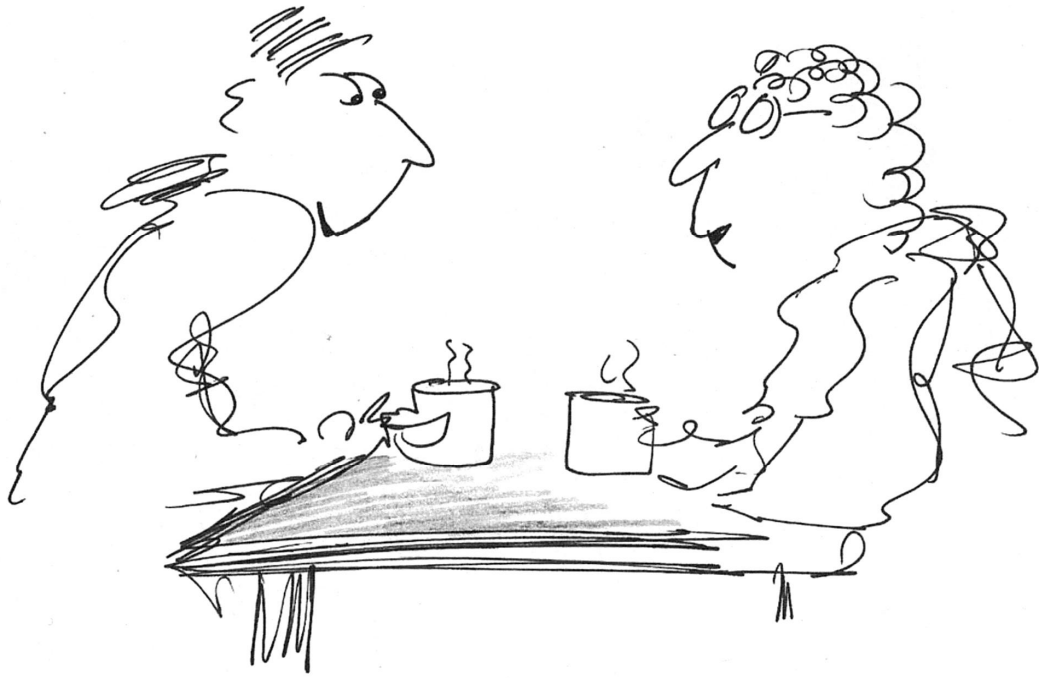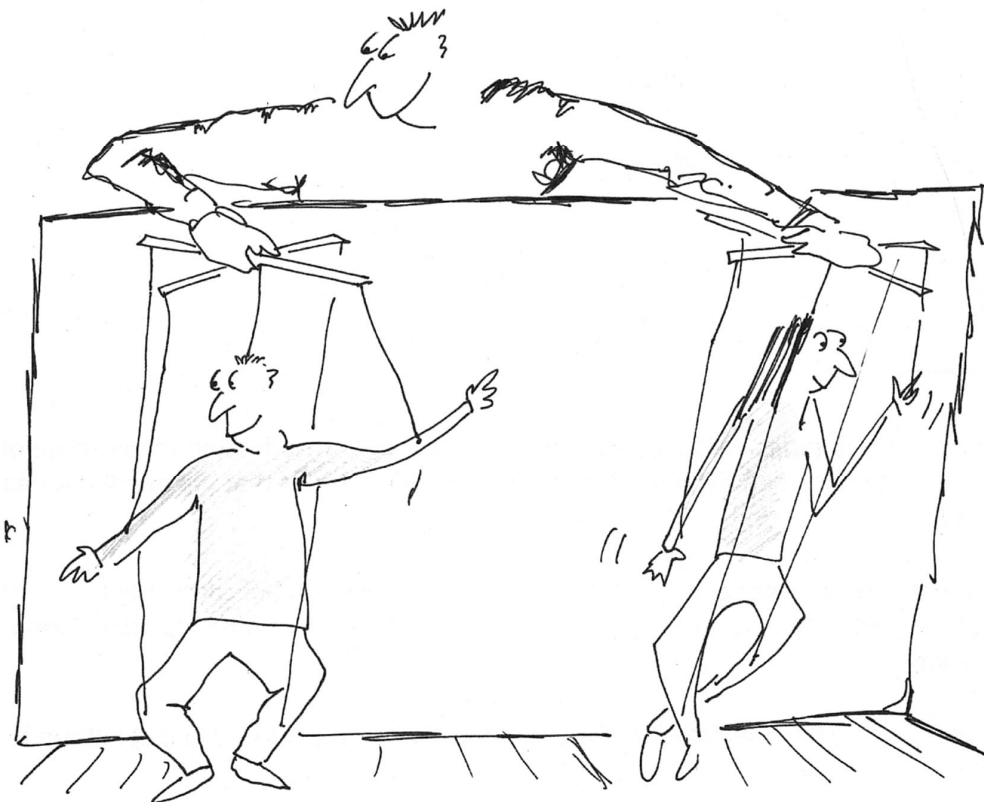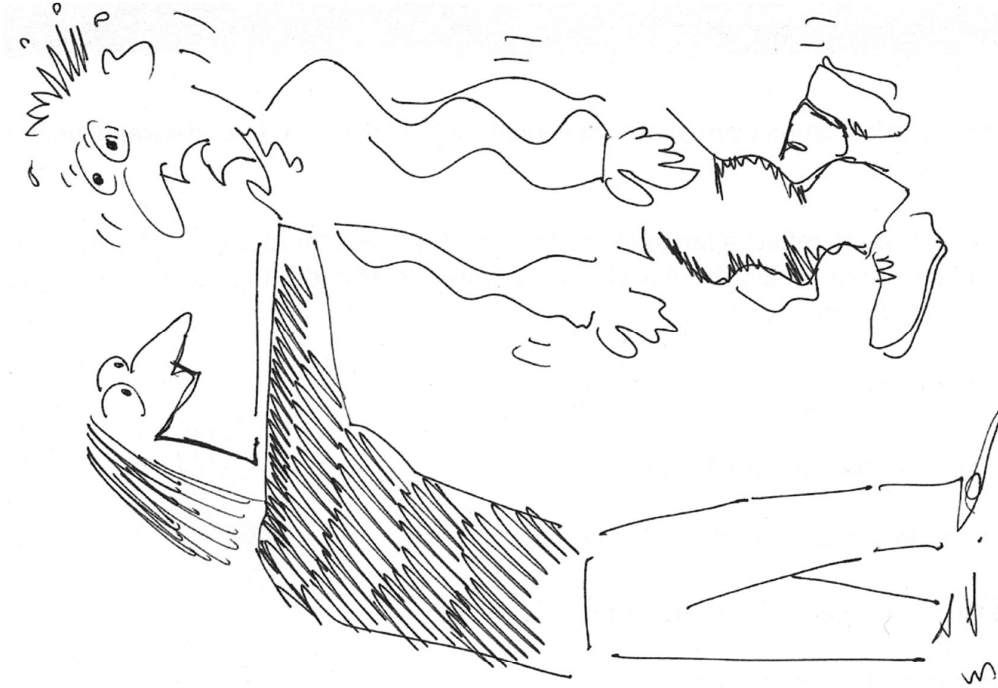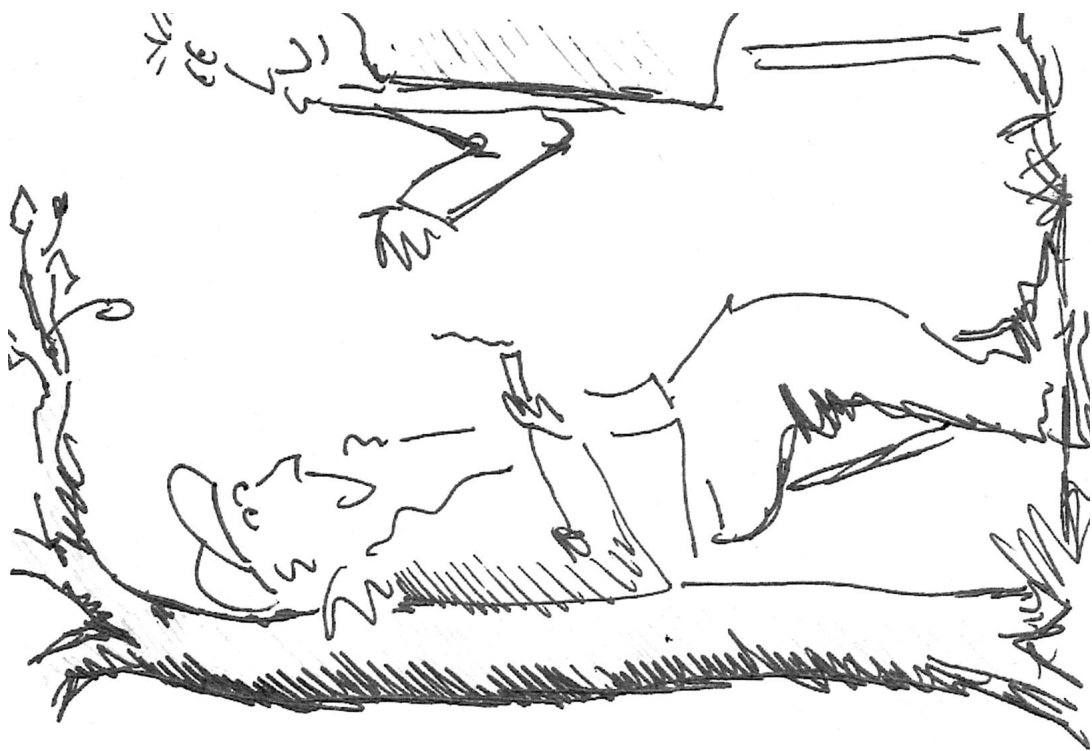
Handout – Positive attitudes

Humility - recognising that local people often have more knowledge and experience of issues than we do ourselves.

Listening - good use of open questions, no interruptions, give people time to say what they really want to say, affirming what they say and checking you've heard what they said.

Confidentiality - respecting personal issues.

Wanting the best for the community - no hidden agendas or desire to manipulate information to suit alternative interests.

Excellence - recording accurately and in a way that everyone can understand.

Creativity - collecting information in a way that is enjoyable and not at all boring or

threatening. **Inclusiveness** - open to hear and understand all regardless of

ethnicity, disability, age, gender.