

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### 3.1 RESEARCH AND SCIENCE

- The 1920 paper by Watson & Rayner on conditioning a phobia in an 8-month-old infant is considered to be one of the founding pieces of scientific research in psychopathology – but what are its weaknesses?
- Because all human beings are different are there likely to be any general 'truths' or processes about psychopathology that can be discovered using scientific method?

### 3.2 CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH – WHAT DO WE WANT TO FIND OUT?

- Can we ever discover whether early experiences have a direct *causal* effect on later psychopathology?
- Is an understanding of the causes of psychopathology the primary aim of clinical psychology research?
- Can doing research on healthy volunteers tell us anything about the causes and symptoms of psychopathology?

### 3.3 RESEARCH DESIGNS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Can epidemiological studies ever be valid and valuable unless they attain a 100% response rate?
- Is some research on psychopathology impossible to carry out because of the distress it may cause to participants who already have mental health problems?
- Can we ever imply causality from the results of a mixed design study?
- Are meta-analyses so flawed in their application that they are no better at providing valid over-views of an area than a discursive review?
- How can the guidelines for conducting systematic reviews be further refined and developed?

### 3.4 ETHICAL ISSUES IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH

- Are all psychopathology studies that involve deception unethical?
- Is it ethically acceptable to recreate the conditions that cause psychopathology in the laboratory?
- Can clinical trials ever provide valid findings unless they use a no treatment control condition?