If you have questions about your rights as a legally authorized representative of a UK research study volunteer, you may call the University of Kentucky Office of Research Integrity at (859) 257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.
If you are having difficulty in making this decision, you may want to seek the guidance of a family member or a trusted advisor. The role of a legally authorized representative is serious, and you should take it seriously. You are being asked to make decisions on behalf of another person, and this can be a challenging task. It is important to weigh the risks and benefits of participating in research and to consider the best interests of the participant.

The substituted judgment approach means that you are being asked to make the decision based on how you think the participant would do it. In other words, you express exactly what you think the individual would do if he or she could still make independent decisions.

For example, a research intervention might hold out a likelihood of benefit for a certain behavioral health problem but might take a very large amount of time. However, you know that the individual would want to advance science and be of possible benefit to others. In this case, you might decide to agree to the individual's participation.

The individual's best interest approach focuses on the best interests of the individual. You follow the best interests of the individual when you make the decision. You consider the potential benefits and risks of participating in research and determine what is best for the individual.

Risk and benefit study

The benefits should outweigh or offset the risks. That is, "this much risk for that much benefit." When you are asked to make this risk/benefit decision, you should carefully weigh the potential benefits and risks. It is important to consider all aspects of well-being, including physical, emotional, and social well-being.

Research risk

You need to understand the risks. Some research interventions carry risks, but these are usually small. You can be important. For example, the risk of participating in a survey or interview might be minimal. However, you should also consider the potential benefits of participating in research. For example, the benefits of participating in a study might include a chance to learn more about the research topic or to contribute to the scientific community.

Research benefit

You are being asked to evaluate the benefits of participating in research. A benefit might be that the new intervention would actually help the individual. There is another kind of benefit that is indirect. In this case, a benefit might be that a lot can be learned about problems or interventions and other people might benefit from the knowledge gained from this study.

You are what is called a "legally authorized representative." You are being asked to evaluate the risks and benefits of participating in a research study. You are being asked to make decisions on behalf of another person. This is a serious role, and you should take it seriously.