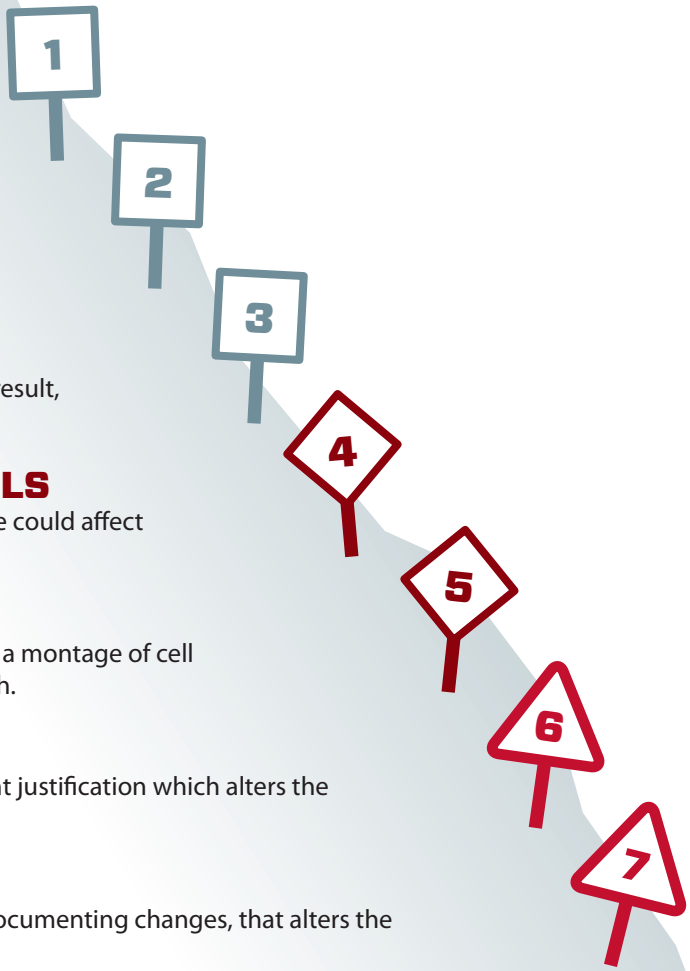
IT'S A SLIPPERY SLOPE
TO RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

It doesn't matter if you're an undergraduate researcher, a graduate student, a post-doc, or a principal investigator who is performing federally funded research, writing a research paper, or leading a research program; research integrity matters at every level.

Small lapses in judgment could lead to a slippery slope ending in research misconduct.

Be vigilant against these common lapses:



1. TAKING SHORTCUTS
Lack of care in experimentation that might impact reproducibility

2. CHEATING
Such as puffery, which is inflating your resume, can establish dangerous behavior patterns

3. "BEAUTIFICATION" OF IMAGES
Removing an unwanted feature, even if unrelated to the result, could be scientifically significant

4. LACK OF APPROPRIATE CONTROLS
Failure to perform a control with the experimental sample could affect result interpretation

5. COMPOSITE IMAGES
Assemblies of images that are not clearly labeled, such as a montage of cell images from the same experiment but not labeled as such.

6. OUTLIERS
Omitting outlier data without appropriate pre-experiment justification which alters the overall conclusion of the analysis

7. IMAGE MANIPULATION
Splicing, cutting, or cropping images; without properly documenting changes, that alters the results or falsely claims a result which was not obtained.

Questionable or Detrimental Research Practices may be considered research misconduct in some cases, but the facts of each case differ and must be individually evaluated.

Adapted with gratitude from the Office of Research Integrity, here: https://ori.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2018-12/Slippery%20Slope%20RM%20Rasterized.pdf