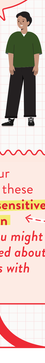
MRCT CENTER
THE BOSTON-PITTSBURGH CLINICAL TRIALS CENTER OF BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL AND HARVARD.

How is... **Sensitive Information** Handled in Research?

Know Your Vocab!
Click here to find out more!

Researchers might ask for information that seems **private.**



Researchers will ask you questions when you participate in research.

Some questions might be about things you're used to sharing, like your age or grade in school.

But other questions might seem **private.**

We call your answers to these questions **sensitive information** because *you might be concerned about sharing this with others.*



Sensitive information could include information about:

- Ethnicity
- Bullying
- Violence
- Sexual activities
- Recreational drug use
- Mental health
- Smoking
- Internet use
- Emotions
- Other things you consider private



Why do researchers collect sensitive information?

Researchers might collect sensitive information to study a topic that's related to that information.

Sometimes it's to keep you safe.

Here's a couple examples:

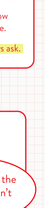
Anika is participating in a study on how often teenagers use marijuana.

The study includes an anonymous survey that asks Anika how many times she has smoked marijuana in the last month.



Curtis wants to enroll in a study that tests a new medications for acne.

Before Curtis can enroll, the researcher asks him if he has depression. The researcher is worried that the new acne medication may make depression worse.



Should I answer questions honestly?

Yes! It's very important to tell the truth.

Telling the truth helps researchers.

If Anika isn't honest about how often she smokes marijuana, the researchers won't have reliable data to answer their study question.

Telling the truth helps keep you safe.

If Curtis has depression but doesn't tell the researcher, he could put himself in danger if the acne medication makes him more depressed.

But if you don't want to answer a question honestly, it's okay to say you can't or don't want to answer!

Will researchers share my sensitive information?

In general, researchers protect your information.

Sometimes the law requires the researcher to share your information to help keep you safe.

For example, the researcher might need to tell an adult if they think you might hurt yourself or someone else.

Researchers should let you know what they will and will not share.

If you're unsure, you can always ask.

You should feel comfortable asking researchers any other **questions** you might have, like:

- Why are you collecting this information from me?
- Can I stay in the study if I don't answer?
- How is this related to the study?
- Will what I say get back to my parents, school, or the police?
- Will I know if you share my sensitive information?
- Will I benefit from sharing my sensitive information?

Questions?

Ask any questions you have!

You have the right to know!

You can learn more at:

mrctcenter.org/for-kids

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