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Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE

Georgia Institute of Technology - Group 2 Social / Behavioral Research
Investigators and Key Personnel

Quiz Results

You correctly answered **4 of 5** quiz questions.

Question 1

Question	In a longitudinal study that will follow children from kindergarten through high school and will collect information about illegal activities, which of the following confidentiality procedures would protect against compelled disclosure of individually identifiable information?
Your Answer	Securing a Certificate of Confidentiality
Result	Correct
Comment	Although data encryption, using pseudonyms, and waiving documentation of consent, provide data protection, the researcher can link individuals to their responses. Therefore, the data are vulnerable to subpoena in civil, criminal, and administrative court proceedings. Unless the researcher has a Certificate of Confidentiality, he or she may be compelled to release individually identifiable information about research subjects. The Certificate provides the highest level of protection.

Question 2

Question	Which of the following constitutes both a breach of confidentiality (the research data have been disclosed, counter to the agreement between researcher and subjects) and a violation of subjects' privacy (the right of the individuals to be protected against intrusion into their personal lives or affairs)?
Your Answer	A faculty member makes identifiable data about sexual behavior available to graduate students, although the subjects were assured that the data would be de-identified.
Result	Correct
Comment	No agreements were made regarding confidentiality with the subjects who were unknowingly audio-taped; whose interactions were recorded, or whose cocaine use was revealed by another. Therefore, there was no breach of an agreement about confidentiality, but the subjects' right to decide who can access their personal information was violated. If a researcher told subjects that only he or she would have access to identifiable data and then gives identifiable data to others that action constitutes a breach of confidentiality and a violation of privacy – the subjects' right to control who has access to personal information.

Question 3

Question	When a focus group deals with a potentially sensitive topic, which of the following statements about providing confidentiality to focus group participants is correct?
Your Answer	The researcher cannot control what participants repeat about others outside the group.
Result	Correct
Comment	It is not possible for a researcher to promise confidentiality in a focus group setting. Participants may choose to repeat sensitive information outside the group setting even if they have signed confidentiality agreements. This is true even if the participants know

each other. Using pseudonyms in the report does not remove concerns about what group members might say outside the group.

Question 4

Question A researcher leaves a research file in her car while she attends a concert and her car is stolen. The file contains charts of aggregated numerical data from a research study with human subjects, but no other documents. The consent form said that no identifying information would be retained, and the researcher adhered to that component. Which of the following statements best characterizes what occurred?

Your Answer Confidentiality of the data has been breached.

Result **Incorrect**

Correct Answer There was neither a violation of privacy nor a breach of confidentiality.

Comment The subjects' privacy has not been violated because the identity of subjects was not included in the file. The confidentiality of the data has not been breached because the data could not be linked to identifiers. Therefore, the correct answer is that there was neither a violation of privacy nor a breach of confidentiality. The release of aggregate data with no identifiers does not constitute a violation of privacy or a breach of confidentiality.

Question 5

Question Additional protections researchers can include in their practice to protect subject privacy and data confidentiality include:

Your Answer All of the above

Result **Correct**

Comment Reporting data in aggregate form can help protect the identity of subjects (but does not make the data anonymous). Keeping keys in secure locations and requiring members of the research team to sign

confidentiality agreements are methods for protecting identifiable information. Researchers can also remove all identifying information from the data and completely disconnect any links between the subjects and data about the subjects.

You scored 80% on the quiz.

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