**Tips to Writing a Debrief**

In general, the debriefing process should consist of the following aspects:

* Label the form as “Debriefing” in the consent forms tab, include the PI name (Faculty Advisor for student projects) and contact information for follow-up questions. For student projects, also include the student researcher’s name and contact information.
* Thank participants for taking the time to participate in the study.
* Explain briefly in lay terms what was being studied (i.e., purpose, hypothesis, aim).
* Include an explanation of how the participants were deceived and the reasons for the deception. These reasons should be clearly explained in plain language that is sensitive to the subject population and any possible discomfort they may have experienced. See examples of active deception vs incomplete disclosure below.
* Explain how the results of the deception will be evaluated.
* Give the subjects the opportunity to re-consent or to withdraw their data once they are fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study.
* Offer to answer any questions that the participant may have.
* For studies that involve sensitive topics, include appropriate resources about information on the topic. For example, UCSB students may receive contact information for CAPS (Counseling & Psychological Services) or community participants may receive contact information for CALM (Child Abuse Listening Mediation). Note that resources should be appropriate to the topic and study population.

*Active deception* – occurs when an investigator gives false information to subjects or intentionally misleads them about some key aspect of the research.

Examples include:

* Participants are given false feedback from a questionnaire, but in actuality the feedback was predetermined by the research team.
* The study includes a "confederate," an individual who poses as a participant, but whose behavior in the study is actually part of the researcher's experimental design.

*Incomplete disclosure* – occurs when an investigator withholds information about the specific purpose, nature, or other aspect of the research.

Examples include:

* Participants are asked to take a quiz for research, but they are not told the research question also involves how background noise affects their ability to concentrate.
* Participants are told that they are participating in a study about environmental attitudes, but they are not told that the study will also test the effectiveness of different types of persuasive messages on attitude change.

**Sample Debrief Form**

***IMPORTANT:*** Instructions and guidance are provided in italics below. Please remove all instructional/guidance text from your debrief document and insert applicable language as needed. The debriefing document must be made available to each participant at the conclusion of his/her participation. Revise the document accordingly for online, verbal, or a signed debriefing.

*[Red indicates instructional text]*

*[Blue indicates examples; sample text may be used if applicable to the study]*

[*Thank the participant for their time:*] Thank you for participating in our research study. We would like to provide you with more information about the research and explain exactly what we are trying to study.

For this study we are interested in … [*Explain briefly* ***what*** *was being studied (i.e., purpose, hypothesis, aim).  Use lay terms and avoid use of jargon*].

*[Identify the deception or incomplete disclosure and explain* ***how*** *the participants were deceived, misled, or what information was withheld:]* To try and obtain unbiased or natural reactions, [*we informed you that…., however in reality…..was created for this experiment and was not real.*]

**OR** *[we led you to believe that the purpose of the study was to… however in reality, the purpose was...]*

**OR** *[during this study, we withheld certain information about … so that …]*

This was necessary for us to … [*Explain* ***why*** *the incomplete disclosure or deception was necessary in order to carry out the research*].

*[Insert if appropriate]:* If you feel upset after having completed the study or find that some questions or aspects of the study were distressing, talking with a *[qualified clinician/counselor/specialists, etc*.] may help. If you would like assistance, please contact *[insert the appropriate resources, name and contact information for psychological/mental health services, append resources to document, etc.].*

[*Insert if appropriate*]*:* Because this study is ongoing, we request that you do not share the true nature and purpose of this experiment with others who might potentially participate in our study.

If you have any questions about this research, please ask us now, or please feel free to contact the principal investigator… [*Insert contact information*]. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research project, please contact the Human Subjects Committee at (805) 893-3807 or hsc@research.ucsb.edu. Or write to the University of California, Human Subjects Committee, Office of Research, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2050

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[*If obtaining re-consent at the time of debriefing]*: Now that you have been fully informed of the true nature and purpose of the study, including all study procedures and research goals, we would like your permission to keep your data for research purposes. You are free with withdraw your data and not let us use it in our study analysis. If you decide to withdraw your data, you will still receive… [*Insert compensation if applicable*]

Please indicate if you give permission for the use of your research data *[please initial/check]:*

\_\_ Yes you may keep my data collected from this study for research purposes

\_\_No you **MAY NOT** keep my data collected from this study for research purposes

OR

I have read this debriefing form and I agree to allow the use of my data for research purposes.

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Name (print)

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Signature

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Date