
Duty to Disclose

What is meant by duty to disclose/report?

The Children and Family Services Act requires those in Nova Scotia to report concerns (see below) of abuse or neglect of a child, while the Adult Protection Act requires those in Nova Scotia to report any adults in need of protection. This is important for researchers as information about neglect and abuse may be revealed while working with participants. Even in research where it is unlikely that disclosure will occur, it is still the responsibility of the researcher to understand this duty.

Student researchers must receive training and instruction on Duty to Report from their supervisors.

Suggested Language

As of July 2019, the CBU REB application form requires the Duty to Disclose (Section 3.6) be completed even if the researcher feels disclosure of harm or abuse is unlikely to take place during their project. The CBU REB provides the following sample language for this section. **Researchers should alter this section to reflect their research and location.** Researchers are responsible for including equivalent language relevant to the jurisdiction (province, country etc.) that the research is being conducted in.

Sample A:

This study is not specifically sampling participants in vulnerable situations. However, in the unlikely event that a child or vulnerable adult was suspected of being abused or neglected through the course of this research, the research team would contact adult protection and/or child protection as appropriate. For adult protection services, we would contact (1-800-225-7225). To report suspected child abuse we would contact [the closest Department of Community Services](#) in our area (Sydney district: 902-563-3300). If further guidance on this matter was required, we would also contact Helen Luedee, Clinical Social Worker at CBU at 902.563.1873, helen_leudee@cbu.ca.

Sample B:

In some cases, the method in which researchers work with participants may not allow participants to disclose this information. For example, data collection that involves online surveys where participants have no opportunity to include their own text. In this case, the researcher must explain why disclosure would not be possible given the nature of the research project.

The nature of this online survey does not allow for participants to input any of their own text. Answers to questions are only multiple choice and therefore there is no opportunity for participants to include disclosure during the data collection of this project.

Further Resources

Researchers are responsible for understanding their responsibilities in this matter. To learn more view:

- [Children and Family Services Act: Duty to Report Fact Sheet](#)
- [Adult Protection Services Fact Sheet](#)