

Guidance for Defining Sensitive Data

Sensitive Data is information that can cause harm to a participant if disclosed. Data can be considered sensitive in one context and not in another, given differences in personal, ethical, and cultural perspective. Sensitivity can also be a function of research design and sample size. Examples of sensitive data include, but are not limited to, information about:

- Sexual attitudes, orientation, or behaviors
- Perspectives on biological vs. gender identity
- Illegal activities
- Use of alcohol, drugs, or other substances
- Mental health diagnosis or treatment history
- Data normally included in a patient's medical record
- Something which could affect employment, legal, or financial standing
- Something which could result in stigma, shunning, or discrimination