Subject: Procedure for Use of Deception or Incomplete Disclosure

Definitions:
1. **Debriefing**: Providing participants with the true purpose of the research experiment and disclosing the reason for the deception.
2. **Deception**: Providing participants with false information about some aspect of the research.
3. **Incomplete disclosure**: Intentionally withholding information about the real purpose or nature of the research.

Procedure:
This procedure gives guidance regarding the standards and parameters for the use of deception and incomplete disclosure in research.

I. The IRB evaluates any potential risks associated with the use of deception or incomplete disclosure on a case-by-case basis. Deception and incomplete disclosure should only be used in research when necessary to prevent the confounding of the study data. Researchers may only conduct a study involving deception or incomplete disclosure when the use is justified by the study’s significant prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and when effective non-deceptive alternative procedures are not feasible.
   A. Deceptive techniques should never be used to entice or lure a subject to participate by falsely representing the nature and purpose of the study;
   B. Participants should not be deceived about aspects of the research which pose greater than minimal risk to the participants; and
   C. Prospective participants should not be deceived about research that is reasonably expected to cause physical pain or severe emotional distress.

II. The investigator should consider debriefing which provides a detailed description of the ways in which deception was used in the research to the participant. The IRB must review and approve the debriefing plan along with any script that details the debriefing information. The researcher is responsible for ensuring that the subject leaves the research setting with an accurate understanding of the deception. The debriefing will be delivered as soon as practical after the subject’s participation. Preferably, debriefing will occur once the participant has completed the study, but no later than at the conclusion of the data collection. Investigators will permit participants to withdraw their data if s/he chooses. If an investigator becomes aware during the debriefing that research procedures have caused harm to a participant, the investigator will take reasonable steps to ameliorate the harm and report the event to the IRB in accordance with HRPP Policy III.L.
   A. Debriefing may not be advisable in certain limited situations; for example, if the research reveals information about the participant that s/he might find disturbing (such as a personality disorder, aggressive behavior tendencies, etc.). In such cases, the principal investigator will weigh the possible harm to the participants and will provide justification for foregoing the debriefing in the protocol submitted to the IRB.
   B. Debriefing may also be waived in limited circumstances where the research involves no more than minimal risk and the nature of the deception or incomplete disclosure is of no impact to the participant.
References:
OHRP Institutional Review Board Guidebook
American Psychological Association Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct