Tips for Success in IRB Process

Institutional Review Boards ensure protection of human subjects and must adhere to federal standards. Minimal risk studies may be exempt or expedited. Beyond minimal risk studies require a full board review that is time intensive.

Student applications:

1. Develop research projects and IRB applications in conjunction with faculty supervisor.

2. Keep supervising faculty 'in the loop' during the application process by including him or her as a Cc with email correspondence and in addressing reviewer comments.

3. Fill out application completely and submit electronically. Include consent forms and survey instruments (if applicable). Permission letters may also be a part of your application.

4. Proof read—this is a professional document that should reflect your knowledge of research principles and ethical conduct for working with human subjects.

Making sure your application is complete:

1. Hypothesis or purpose should be clearly stated and connected to research literature.

2. Describe your study design using language that is specific, concise, and defines relevant concepts or terms.

3. If you're using measures or scales from another source, include relevant citations.

4. Are the data you're collecting relevant to your study's purpose or hypothesis? (Important note: don't collect sensitive data unless you've justified inclusion based on research purpose.)

5. Any potential risks need to be clearly described in your application and your consent form.

6. Explicitly state that participation in your study is voluntary and a participant may withdraw consent at any time.

7. Will participants be compensated for their time?

8. *Consent process* needs to be addressed explicitly. If written consent form is not being used, you need to justify.

9. Consent form should have contact information for you *and* your faculty supervisor.

10. Any potential for psychological distress, include Brown House info for referral

11. If using underage participants, parental consent is required. If parental consent is not possible or practical, you will need to make a case for a waiver of consent. In addition, consent from underage participants should be sought.

12. Confidentiality vs. anonymity—an important distinction

13. Include descriptions of procedures to ensure confidentiality / anonymity (e.g. providing envelope or box for collecting completed; not allowing a participant to hand you or other person a completed questionnaire directly)

14. Data security should be addressed. For example, where will completed questionnaires be stored? Identify a locked cabinet or other secure location.

15. What will you do with completed questionnaires after your study has been completed?

16. How will the data be analyzed and disseminated?

About review process:

1. Please allow 5-7 working days for initial review.

2. After one or more board members review your application, you may be required to provide additional information or otherwise revise your research protocol. You are not authorized to begin your research until you have received IRB approval.

*Advance consultation is encouraged if you have specific questions or concerns about your research.

My contact info:
Dr. Katie Bouley
Associate Professor, Exercise Science
Chair, Institutional Review Board – Lyndon campus
ASAC 219 (teaching schedule & office hours posted on my door)
802-626-6369
Katie.Bouley@NorthernVermont.edu