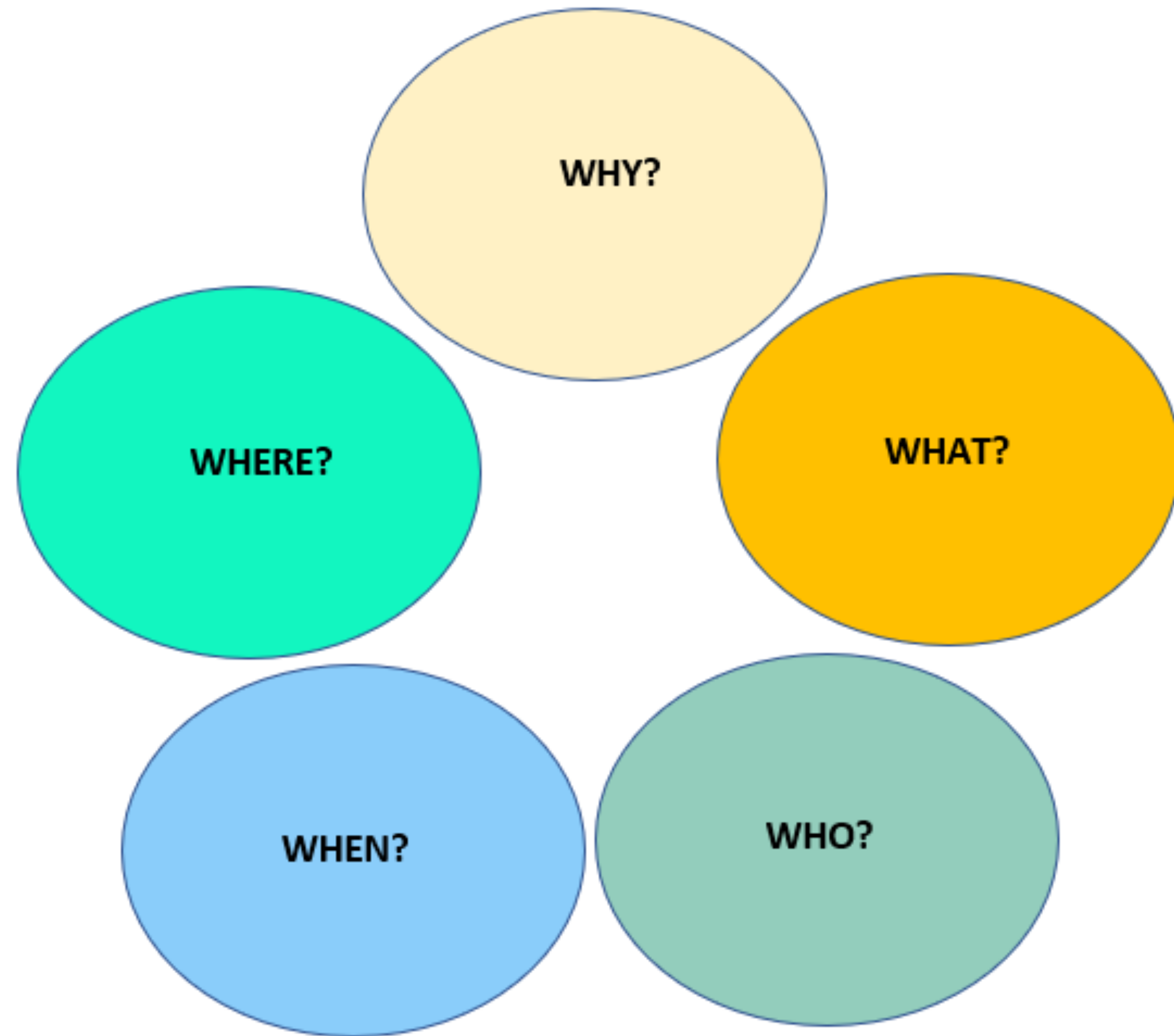


Five W's of Ethics

Ethics

This is a short presentation to provide you with some basic information on research ethics and answers to questions you may have with respect to ethics processes at TRU. We will be exploring the 5 W's of research ethics.

What are the 5 W's?



WHY?

By the second half of the 20th century science has expanded new techniques of research for different diseases and scientists became increasingly aware of the effects and the expanding usage of human participants in research experiments.

The 1946 Nuremberg trials of Nazi German doctors was the beginning of an organized and concentrated effort to determine an international code of ethics to ensure that all participants in research are appropriately treated. In Canada researchers follow the guidelines of the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2). Here is a link to the website <https://www.brandonu.ca/research/files/TCPS2-2014.pdf>

WHAT?

Let's talk about **What** next: What is ethics and ethics approval? What does it mean to me?

It means that you will consider three core principles when dealing with human participants:

1. Respect for Persons
2. Concern for Welfare
3. Justice

In a nutshell what it means is that you must navigate the difficult course between two main goals of providing the necessary protection of participants and serving the legitimate requirements of research. By applying these principles you maintain free, informed and ongoing consent through the research and share the benefits of the research. There are lots of things to consider when you are thinking about your research project and exactly what you are asking your participants to do. Respect for Persons is just that.



Respect for persons recognizes the intrinsic value of human beings and the respect and consideration they are due. An important mechanism for respecting participants is the requirement to seek their free, informed and ongoing consent. Keep in mind that some participants may have certain factors that diminish their ability to give consent – for example, under age children, people with cognitive impairment or other mental health issues or impairments.



Respect

Concern

Concern for Welfare is the quality of a person's experience of life in all aspects. Welfare includes physical, mental and spiritual health, physical, economic and social circumstances. Housing, employment, security, family life, community membership are all important to think about during your research.

Justice refers to the obligation to treat people fairly and equitably. An important threat to justice is the imbalance of power that may exist between researcher and participant. One important difference that must be considered for fairness and equity is vulnerability. Vulnerability is often caused by limited capacity and vulnerable groups have historically included children, the elderly, women, prisoners, those with mental health issues, diminished capacity for self-determination, ethno-cultural minorities and those who are institutionalized are a few examples.

You must think of your participant with all these factors in mind.
Consider your participants is the best 'mantra' that you can have.

Justice

WHO?

Now let's talk about **Who** – It's all about **Who** – your research participants. They are the focus of an ethics application. You will need to gain their informed consent which means you must tell them all about you, your research project and what it is you want them to help you with. Here are the things you need to be able to tell your participants to ensure they are well informed;

1. Who you are and what your research is about
2. Have you told them how much of their time you require
3. Explained how you will keep their information confidential and anonymous
4. Explained that they can partake if they wish, or withdraw if they want to
5. If they chose to withdraw explain what will happen to their information
6. Explain if there will be any likelihood of discomfort or risks
7. Provide a place for their signature
8. Provide contact details for yourself and the REB Chair in case they have any concerns
9. Provide information on how you will share the research findings with them

The core of your consent form should be this – gaining free and informed consent to partake in your research. Put yourself in your participant's shoes and envision what you would ask a researcher if they asked you to be part of their survey/study.

Of course not all participants are able to give their informed consent due to age (under 16) cognitive impairment or other mental health issues or illness. Be thoughtful of who your participants are.



When do I need ethics approval? If your research involves the use of human participants or animals you will need an ethics review – from the Research Ethics Board or the Animal Welfare Committee.



You will need to obtain an ethics approval anytime you are interacting and involving human participants in your research and the participants are the focus of the research. They are unique among the many parties involved in the research because they themselves bear the primary risks of the research.



If the participants themselves are **not** the focus of the research you will **not** need ethics approval. For example you may collect information from authorized personnel to release information in the normal course of their employment duties about organizations, policies, procedures, etc and they would not be the focus of the research.



You will **not** need to get ethics approval for research that is done using **publicly available information** that is legally accessible to the public and appropriately protected by law; or there is **no reasonable expectation of privacy**.



Publicly available information is any existing stored documentary materials, records or publications that are legally accessible – for example – library books, court judgements, public archives, internet videos, etc. So if you are doing a literature review for example you would not need an ethics approval.



If there is **no reasonable expectation of privacy** ethics approval is **not** required. Observational research would not require ethics approval and researchers should pay attention to the environment in which the observation takes place and the expectation of privacy that an individual may have in that space. That coupled with the possibility of identification of an individual in the final dissemination will help determine the expectation of privacy.

WHEN?

WHERE?

Finally, **where** can you go to find out more information and the ethics application form?

Ethics FAQ

The research office has more information and a [frequently asked questions \(FAQ\) page](#). If you still have questions just contact the office or talk with your supervisor.

Apply for Ethics Approval - Romeo

Here at TRU we use the Romeo software system to administer the application process. All ethics information is on our website at www.tru.ca/research/research-ethics.html. This is where you will find a link to Romeo. You will need to create a profile with login/password to gain access to an application.

Application Contents

The application consists of approximately 25 questions that explains the details of your research and the participant interactions, data storage, survey information, etc. It is helpful when you are *beginning* your project to review an application form and its' questions to help you shape your research appropriately and to provide you with some thoughts on how you will interact with your participants.

If you are unsure if you require ethics approval your supervisor will be able to help you and if you are still not sure you can call our offices.

