

# Healthy Relationships

**HANDBOOK**

# Eastern Mediterranean University Psychological Counseling Guidance and Research Center EMU-PDRAM

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# EMU Rules

## EMU rules which should be obeyed in order to avoid sanctions

- Behave in a way that will not cause trouble/ disturb the social order of the university.
- Be respectful to the Board of Trustees, the President, Faculty Members, and the university personnel.
- Avoid using offensive language towards other students, or deliberately threatening or disturbing them.
- Do not tear the announcements and documents of the university, or put graffiti on them.
- Do not organize any meeting, conference or panel without the permission of the Rector's Office.
- Do not boycott or occupy the university campus.
- Do not organize political propaganda or strikes on the university campus.
- Do not misuse the equipment, tools, materials and buildings of EMU.
- Do not commit criminal acts or steal other people's property.
- Do not miss classes and exams without an excuse.
- Do not try to get exam questions before the exam.
- Do not cheat or plagiarize.
- Do not attend an exam in place of somebody else or make somebody attend an exam in your place.

- Do not withhold necessary information from the disciplinary board when asked.
- Do not make false statements to the university authorities.
- Do not commit shameful crimes.
- Do not gamble on the campus.
- Do not use or sell harmful or illegal substances and alcohol on the campus.
- Do not use or carry sharp objects, guns or similar dangerous objects which may harm others.
- Obey the traffic rules within the campus area and pay attention to the warnings of security officers.

- After the termination of any kind of suspension period imposed by the University Disciplinary Board, do not repeat the same behavior or do similar actions, or maintain the same attitude, which caused the original suspension.
- Do not attempt or make unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conducts of sexual nature on or off campus.

**For more information please check EMU Rules & Regulations on EMU's website (<http://mevzuat.emu.edu.tr>).**

# Preface

**Dear Eastern Mediterranean University Students and Staff,**

**Since its establishment in 1997, the Eastern Mediterranean University Psychological Counseling Guidance and Research Center (EMU-PDRAM) has been providing psychological and research services within EMU, and it is determined to continue and improve its scientific, principled and human friendly approach. One of the indicators of this determination is the recently reviewed and improved EMU-PDRAM's Healthy Relationships Handbook that you are reading right now. The range of our psychological services is expanding as revealed by close communication with students, parents and the EMU staff and by scientific research carried out on this target population. Our aim is to help individuals to live their lives with improved self-confidence and self-esteem in order to be independent and successful individuals who are at ease with themselves and others.**

Each individual is in a continuing relationship with him/herself and with other individuals around (e.g. family members, friends, romantic partners etc.). EMU-PDRAM's Healthy Relationships

Handbook was prepared to provide information on some issues (e.g., healthy sexuality, healthy relationships and sexual orientation) which individuals might face with in their relationships with other people. The Handbook also includes information on how to cope with challenging life events (e.g. domestic violence, divorce, self harm-self injury, harassment and sexual abuse) in a healthy and functional way.

In the first few pages of this handbook, you will find information about the establishment of EMU-PDRAM, its development and the services it provides. You can also find the universal ethical principles for psychologists that are consistently observed by the EMU-PDRAM psychologists while providing these services. Next are short explanations of some topics and tips which we believe would be beneficial to EMU students and staff by helping them to live a healthy, successful and happy adulthood. From time to time, everyone might need to consult a psychologist and to get the view and support of a specialist. As EMU-PDRAM psychologists, we are ready to listen to you within the framework of the ethical principles of Psychology, to share your concerns and to support you in the process of finding an appropriate solution.

Best wishes,  
EMU-PDRAM Psychologists

# An Overview

Eastern Mediterranean University Psychological Counseling Guidance and Research Center (EMU-PDRAM) was established and approved by the University Board on November 4<sup>th</sup> 1997 as a unit working in direct association with the Rector's office. EMU-PDRAM is a pioneer institution in North Cyprus that offers psychological services at the university level. EMU-PDRAM is located on the ground floor of the Health Center and psychological services have been actively offered since the Spring of 1998.

## EMU-PDRAM Founding Director

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*Administrative Assistant*

## Objectives

**The objective of EMU-PDRAM is to provide psychological services to the individuals at EMU.**

It is aimed at helping EMU students to access psychological services suitable for their age and developmental stage without any discrimination in order to enable them to develop as healthy, successful and happy individuals. It is also aimed at supporting EMU staff in their efforts to improve their lives and to have more efficient and healthy life choices.

## Mission & Vision

**The vision of EMU-PDRAM is to pursue psychological research and applications according to the European Union (EU) standards. EMU-PDRAM's mission is to make services that improve performance, cognition and behavior available to all individuals at EMU.**

Additionally, EMU-PDRAM conducts and publishes psychological research in certain branches of psychology. The aim of these research projects is to prepare programs which enhance EMU students and staff's understanding and awareness of their social, emotional and cognitive potentials and which helps them to utilize resources available to them to become healthy, successful and happy individuals.



# Psychological Services

## Psychological Counseling

### Individual Counseling Services

- Psychometric Measurement and Assessment

### Group Counseling Services

- Psycho-educational programs for EMU students and staff
- Psycho-educational programs offered to community

### Group counseling topics;

- Developing effective communication skills
- Effective study skills
- Effective time management programs
- Coping with stress
- Exam anxiety and coping with exam anxiety
- Coping with sleep problems
- Anger Management
- Coping with interpersonal violence

## Guidance

### Awareness Raising Programs

- To enhance an individual's objective insight of his/her personality
- To help individuals better understand their personality and potential, through the use of various psychometric methods
- To guide the students to understand how to use their existing potential

### Information and Guidance Services

- To support the students in coping with potential academic difficulties
- To inform the students about specialized fields of education which are suitable for them
- To guide the students in their future vocational and career fields

## Research Activities

### Research Fields

- Attitudes toward getting psychological help among university students
- Attitudes toward domestic violence
- Emotional literacy
- Life satisfaction in old age
- Healthy divorce
- Emerging adults
- Parent attitudes

# Universal Ethical Principles for Psychologists

## **Beneficence and Nonmaleficence**

Psychologists respect, seek to safeguard the rights and welfare of those whom they interact professionally.

## **Justice**

Psychologists recognize that fairness and justice entitle all persons to access to and benefit from the contributions of the discipline of psychology and psychological services.

## **Respect for People's Rights and Dignity**

Psychologists are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, socio-economic status, etc.

## **Fidelity and Responsibility**

Psychologists are aware of their professional and scientific responsibilities to individuals/ societies in which they work.

## **Integrity**

Psychologists seek to promote accuracy, honesty and truthfulness in the science, teaching and practice of psychology.

## First time at EMU-PDRAM



**Individuals who would like to get psychological services from EMU-PDRAM, initially fill out an application form and then an appointment is made to meet with a psychologist.**

It is important to make an appointment to be provided with psychological services in order to avoid waiting. Individuals may make appointments either by coming to EMU-PDRAM in person or by calling extension 2251. The same

number can be used to inform the center about rescheduling or canceling an appointment.

If the person cannot attend his/her session, then he/she is required to cancel or reschedule for another day and time. It is important to inform the center about a cancellation in order to show respect to others who may need these services as well. Psychological services provided by EMU-PDRAM are free of charge.

# What is Psychology?

**Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and related psychological, social and biological processes in both human and animals. The discipline of Psychology has only been around for the past 136 years.**

Despite being a relatively new discipline, the subject matters of psychology are diverse, spanning from biology all the way to sociology. Biology studies the structures and functioning of living organisms. Sociology examines how groups function in society. Psychologists make their services available to individuals to improve their performance, cognition and behavior.

Psychologists study the intersection of two critical relationships: one between brain functions and behavior, and one between environment and behavior. Psychologists develop theories and test them through research and publish their findings to promote further research and implementation of the results. Furthermore, they develop new approaches from established knowledge to meaningful

models to explain the adaptation of people and societies to change. Psychology is a tremendously wide field. Psychologists conduct both basic and applied research, serve as consultants to communities and organizations, diagnose and treat people and advance in academic careers. They assess intelligence and personality through objective methods and tests. They study how human beings relate to each other and also to machines and technology. They work to improve these relationships and offer advice and help to improve psychological wellbeing.

Many psychologists work independently. They can also team up with other professionals such as doctors, lawyers, school personnel, computer experts, engineers, legislators, the police and army to contribute in every area of society. Psychologists work in laboratories, hospitals, courtrooms, schools, universities, community health centers, mass communication centers and prisons. For example they work with business executives, performers and athletes to reduce stress and improve performance. When requested, they give advice in court depending on their

expertise and collaborate with educators on school curriculum, with doctors at neurology and oncology clinics and with psychiatrists at psychiatry clinics. Immediately following a disaster, such as a plane crash or bombing, earthquakes or tsunami, psychologists help victims and bystanders to recover from the trauma or shock of the event. They team up with law enforcement and public health officials to improve the quality and extent of services provided after such events.

Career opportunities in psychology are expanding in number and scope, especially for those with postgraduate degrees. Indeed, many of the problems society faces today are behavioral problems, for example, drug addiction, poor personal relationships, violence at home and on the street, and the harm we do to our environment. It is important to develop preventative strategies as well as diagnose problems in the society. This approach leads to the development of programs that promote healthy behavioral patterns in everyday life.

# Subfields of Psychology

**Evolutionary**  
Psychology

**Developmental**  
Psychology

**Social**  
Psychology

**Media**  
Psychology

**Educational**  
Psychology

**School**  
Psychology

**Clinical**  
Psychology

**Experimental**  
Psychology

**Health**  
Psychology

**Family**  
Psychology

**Sport**  
Psychology

**Traffic**  
Psychology

**Art**  
Psychology

**Counseling**  
Psychology

**Rehabilitation**  
Psychology

**Consumer**  
Psychology

**Personality**  
Psychology

**Law and**  
Psychology

**Neuroscience**  
and Psychology

**For further information  
about Psychology:**

<http://www.psikolog.org.tr>

<http://www.apa.org>

<http://www.bps.org.uk>

<http://www.sfpys.org>

<http://www.cpa.ca>

<http://www.efpa.be>

# Healthy Relationships

**Starting from birth, we all establish relationships with people around us. It would be impossible to think about an individual with no relationships at all. So where does this need to develop relationships with others come from?**

We have been together with other people since birth and we become a whole with people in our environment and in our relationships. We also form emotional bonds with people around us which enables us to strengthen our feeling of trust towards the world and to continue to form new relationships.

An individual's ability to form healthy relationships with people around him/her, to persist with these relationships and to cope with possible problems related to these relationships are strongly linked to individual's psychological well-being. However, it is impossible to control the dynamics of our relationships with our family, friends, romantic partners

or even with ourselves all the time. We may not feel sure about how to cope when we are faced with unexpected and challenging changes in our relationships (e.g. exposure to violence). However, even though we can not control the negative changes in our relationships all the time, we can be more able to control the impact of these negative conditions on our thoughts and emotions. In this way, we can develop healthier relationships and can have a more positive psychological well-being.

The Healthy Relationships Handbook includes important issues on our intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships. You will find information and some tips that we believe will be beneficial to you for living a happy life with healthy relationships.

# Healthy Close Relationships

During your time at EMU, along with your academic education, there will be many non-academic experiences and interrelationships. You will learn how to get along with others in a mature and satisfying way.

Friendships don't just happen. Although one person may start a friendship, both parties will need to contribute to the process.

Remember that relationships are processes that take time to flourish. People often expect a relationship as an all-or-nothing deal. However, it takes time to identify and sort out your feelings about someone and determine the quality of a particular relationship. Therefore, allow yourself to take this time.

## **Being Roommate/Housemate**

Even though you think you are good at interpersonal relationships sometimes sharing a room or a house with another person might be challenging. Learning to live in harmony with a person may take time.

## **The Art of Communication**

When people are asked what the most important ingredients in a relationship are, communication is almost always at the top of the list. On the other hand, we are rarely taught how to communicate effectively. If we learn to communicate effectively with others and are willing to share our own feelings and respect other's feelings, many rewards will await us as we learn to get close to another person.

When you are stating an opinion, making an observation, or expressing a feeling, the most appropriate format to use is called the "I-statement". I-statements allow us to state things in positive terms, to express ourselves directly and honestly, and to take responsibility for what we think, feel and need while avoiding blaming or accusing others. In contrast, "You-statements" blame the other person, put him/her on the defensive, and often block the communication channels. For example, instead of saying "*You didn't wash the dishes!*" you may say "*I am not happy when the dishes are left in the sink unwashed. Can you wash them please?*"

## **Romantic Relationships**

Being away from home in a university setting is liberating. The free atmosphere of the university may lead to new experiences with others. Having a romantic (intimate) relationship is often exciting and fulfilling, but it can also be confusing and frustrating when both parties do not have a clear understanding of the purpose of the relationship.

### **Some of the positive qualities in an intimate relationship are:**

- Honesty,
- Two-way communication between the partners,
- Mutual care; which implies to equal amount of give and take in the relationship,
- Empathy,
- Commitment towards nurturing the relationship,
- Mutual respect,
- Trust for each other,
- Enjoying each others company and working towards spending quality time together,
- Patience, thoughtfulness and appreciation,

- Willingness for compromise,
- Intimacy; feeling physically comfortable with each other as well as sharing a mutual willingness to meet the needs of sexual intimacy and safety.

### **Healthy development of a romantic relationship is related to:**

- **Personal development:** In order to experience a balanced and harmonious romantic relationship, we need to develop personally. When we try to get to know ourselves, develop our uniqueness, be in touch with our own emotions and mobilize our inner strenghts, then it is much easier for us to connect with someone else.
- **Respect towards individual responsibilities:** Being a student brings it's own responsibilities. University students who are involved in romantic relationships should be open about their individual needs. When they realize that some of these needs can be satisfied outside of their romantic relationship, such as studying, they should show mutual respect and understanding towards each other.



- **The balance between Me & We:** In spite of the general assumption that happy couples always do things together, being in a healthy relationship has nothing to do with constantly being within each other's eye-sight. On the contrary, research findings show that individuals need to have flexible and appropriate boundaries, spend time separately for their personal hobbies and keep making new friends in order to enhance self-awareness and personal well-being.
- **Similarities and differences:** For a romantic relationship to work well, parties do not have to be the same. Similarities in terms of personality traits, moral values and worldview surely connect us to each other but differences work as well. Sometimes, because of the differences between individuals, resolving an issue completely is not possible. However, by being flexible, understanding and accepting, we can get partial solutions. Differences make us and our relationships grow.
- **Languages of love:** Some of us say "I love you" very easily, some of us don't. Some of us prefer to show love by body language, by spending quality time together, by

buying gifts, by telling words of appreciation or by acting in such a way that would take the load off our partner or benefit him/her. Remember that there is no right or wrong way of showing love and all of those ways (languages) are just fine.

- **Sexuality:** Sexuality is a natural and healthy ingredient of a romantic relationship. Having sex is a grown-up activity. When a person reaches a certain level of physical and psychological maturity, s/he is free to enjoy sex while undertaking the responsibilities for his/her actions. Partners' mutual consent, desire and readiness is a **MUST** for this act.

Just like all the other aspects in life, we have the **freedom/right to choose** which relationships to build. In any type of relationship we have the right to choose the ones that make us feel peaceful, relaxed, free and accepted. Also we have the right to get away from the ones that are limiting and harmful.

**Relationships are unique and complex. Do not hesitate to visit EMU-PDRAM for interpersonal conflicts.**

# Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is any type of aggressive act directed toward a person's partner, children, parents, siblings and/or relatives. However, not only violence of a physical nature is included in this definition; derogation, threatening, limiting financial expenditures, coercing into marriage, forcing or prohibiting from getting work, and limiting or preventing involvement with friends and family members are also forms of domestic violence. This aggressive act serves to reduce the dignity and self-esteem of the individual, creating an environment of insecurity towards oneself and one's environment.

## **Always remember,**

**Violence is a crime and a human rights violation.**

**You have the right to live freely without fear.**

**Violence within a family is also a crime.**

If you are experiencing domestic violence;

- Objectively scrutinize what it is that you are experiencing,
- Understand that the violence you are experiencing is NOT your fault,
- Seek support and help.



### Cycle of Violence

According to Lenore Walker, within time the tension of domestic violence may escalate into a vicious cycle. This has three phases that follow one another:

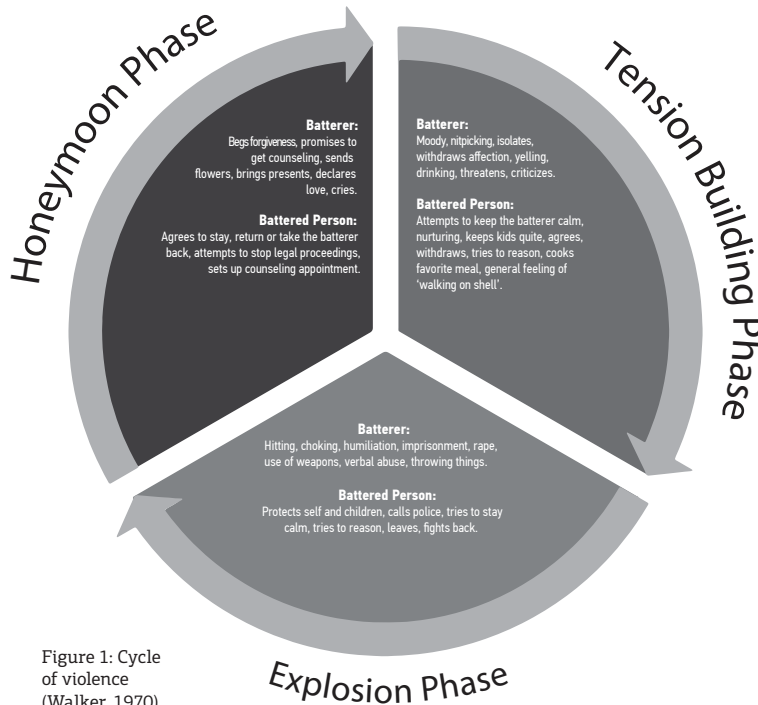


Figure 1: Cycle of violence (Walker, 1970)

Research showed that, women are the most likely group to experience domestic violence.

The United Nations declared the 25th November as "International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women" (United Nations, 1999). The aim of this was to raise public awareness of the fact that domestic violence is on the rise around the world and to encourage governments to create and enforce precautionary policies to prevent domestic violence.

# The Myths and Facts of Domestic Violence

**Myth:** Domestic violence only occurs in poor and uneducated families.

**Fact:** Domestic violence is experienced in every society at all levels of socio-economic and educational status. Rich and well educated families are able to cover it up more successfully.

**Myth:** Domestic violence is not as common as assumed.

**Fact:** All around the world one out of every four families experience domestic violence.

**Myth:** Domestic violence only includes beating.

**Fact:** Domestic violence has many types. Pushing, slapping, punching, breaking arm or legs, etc. are examples of physical abuse; constant criticism, humiliating, derogating, swearing, etc. are verbal abuse; preventing involvement with family and friends, stalking, forbidding from leaving the house, etc. are examples of socially isolating abuse; forcing unwanted sex, rape, etc. are sexual abuse; not giving money, not giving information regarding family income, taking his/her money, etc. are forms of economic abuse.

**Myth:** If apologized one should forgive and forget.

**Fact:** If precautions are not taken, the violence will be repeated and escalated.

**Myth:** Alcohol leads to domestic violence.

**Fact:** An individual will often use alcohol as an excuse to the abuse. However, alcohol cannot be the single cause for abuse. This is a method by which individuals can shift responsibility.

**Myth:** If a woman cannot accept or does not want to be abused she should leave home.

**Fact:** Many women cannot leave an abusive home environment due to several factors such as economic dependence, love of partner and hope that he will change, societal pressures, helplessness and low self-esteem.

Women are more likely to be abused by their closest male relatives (e.g. brother, father) or by their spouse/partner. Whatever the reason, **no one deserves to be abused.**

**You can apply EMU-PDRAM to get information and support to be protected and cope with domestic violence.**

# A Healthy Divorce

**A healthy divorce is the one in which family members interact harmoniously even after the parents dissolve their unhealthy marriage. Parents' first goal should be to provide their children with a healthy family context with a healthy marriage. However, for those who wish to end their marriage, a healthy divorce should be the main goal.**

## **How does parents' divorce affect individuals?**

Research has indicated that some individuals experience the negative consequences of their parents' divorce (i.e. considerable pain, unhappy memories, and continued distress) throughout their lives whereas some can be resilient and strong afterwards (i.e. being successful in many fields, having increased maturity and developing skills in coping with problems).

Over the past decade, research findings have shown that parental conflict at the time of divorce and/or postdivorce have a much more negative impact on healthy development and the well-being of offsprings than the divorce itself.

## **Parents' divorce and being resilient**

Some individuals from divorced families are successful in many areas of life. These people have coped well with their parents' divorce and have experienced the following:

- Their parents do not have severe conflicts but can cooperate with each other at the time of divorce and postdivorce.
- Their socioemotional and financial needs are paid attention to and are met at the time of divorce and postdivorce.
- They are provided with a warm relationship by their residential parent.
- They are given the opportunity to have social, cultural and/or sports activities which help them to relieve emotional pressure.
- They are provided with emotional support by people around them (such as; parents, grandmothers, grandfathers, close friends).

## An Individual's Rights During and After Parental Divorce

### Each individual whose parents are divorced has the right to:

- Love and be loved by both of their parents without feelings of guilt or disapproval.
- Be protected from their parents' anger.
- Be kept out of parental conflict, including the right not to pick sides, carry messages, or hear complaints about the other parent.
- Have equal access to both parents, without having to choose one over the other.
- Know well in advance about important changes that will affect his/her life; for example, when one of the parents is going to move or get remarried.
- Express his/her feelings or thoughts and to have both parents listen to how s/he feels.
- Have a life that is as close as possible to what it would have been if the parents had stayed together.

**Please remember that, by asking for the support and guidance of a professional, you can protect your family members from the negative consequences of divorce.**



# Overcoming Your Parents' Divorce

**For many people, their parents' divorce marks a turning point in their lives, whether the divorce happened many years ago or is taking place right now.**

If your parents are in the divorce process, you may experience many different feelings. You may feel lonely, stressed out, angry, frustrated, abandoned, afraid, worried, guilty or sad. You might also feel protective of one parent or blame the other one for the situation. Yet, as reported by adult children with divorced parents, consequences of divorce can be constructive afterwards. Adult children with divorced parents have mainly reported that:

- The result of divorce can be positive for everyone in the family.
- There may be a period of great despair, but with some effort, a more constructive, positive period can follow.
- Divorce may be associated with escape from high conflict, the building of new relationships and the opportunity for personal growth.



### **How to Overcome Your Parents' Divorce**

Research evidence has shown that most offsprings with divorced parents function as well as offsprings whose parents have not been divorced. There is also evidence that in comparison to their peers whose parents are not divorced, some offsprings of divorced parents show enhanced levels of maturity, self-esteem and empathy after parental divorce.

#### **In order to cope with your parents' divorce, consider the following:**

- You have the right to have a satisfying relationship with each parent and with your extended family.
  - You are entitled to know about the impending divorce. If you believe you are being “kept in the dark”, ask your parents for more information.
  - Do not assume responsibility for your parents' happiness or contentment. Your responsibilities are to keep up with your friends and to have time for academic, social and/or sports activities.
  - There are two sides to a relationship, so be fair to both of your parents. If there is “negativity” of one parent toward the other, ask him/her to stop, as it hurts you.
  - You have two parents and you have the right to see both of them as you need.
- You have the right to support your younger siblings as they too are trying to cope. You will also learn some skills in helping that may surprise and enrich you.
  - If prior to your parents' divorce, your home was tense with their conflict, arguing, insults, impatience with you, or perhaps worse, domestic violence and excessive alcohol or drug use, you may feel relief when they are finally separated. Don't feel guilty for your honest feelings.
  - “Love” is one of the most important needs for person. Don't let your parents' divorce discourage you from engaging in romantic relationships.

**There may be a time of despair in dealing with your parents' divorce; however, a lot of growth can also be derived from this time. EMU-PDRAM will provide you with help in this process.**



# Harassment

**Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment involves any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends or humiliates the individual. Any individual may be subjected to harassment by people they know or they don't know.**

Harassment is not only a physical act but can also be a verbal act. Defaming one's personality by spreading lies about him/her, sending messages, pictures and/or notes containing explicit sexual material, forcing people to have sexual relationships are all examples of abuse and it is necessary to learn how to cope with these. Harassment also occurs when someone makes unwelcome remarks or jokes about one's personal characteristics such as race, religion, sex, age or disability when someone threatens or intimidates you or when someone makes unwelcome physical contact with you, such as touching, patting, pinching or punching.



**Suggestions to the people who have been subjected to harassment:**

It is not easy to overcome such an experience since it is not only a physical assault but also an emotional trauma. Firstly, calm down, get medical help immediately if necessary and receive treatment, try to continue your daily routine as much as possible.

- Trust yourself. Do not blame yourself.
- Don't rush into making any hasty decisions.
- Talk to someone you trust - your roommate, your family, your friend or your teacher.
- In order to remember what you experienced after you have calmed down, write down the place and the date of the incident and the names of the people who witnessed it or who were involved in it. This will help you if you want to complain legally.
- Become aware of your rights and responsibilities and do not hesitate to inform the university administration.

**Suggestions for how to help people who have been subjected to harassment:**

- Believe him/her.
- Be available.
- Comfort him/her.

- Support him/her so that s/he does not feel guilty.
- Tell him/her that you understand his/her feelings.
- Don't stop him/her if s/he wants to cry.
- Help him/her organize his/her thoughts, but do not influence his/her decisions or acts.
- Don't give him/her any advice.
- Provide protection (a place to sleep, etc.).
- Encourage him/her to record the evidence.
- Help him/her receive medical attention.
- Try to figure out what s/he wants from you and tell him/her how to contact the counseling services.
- Recommend him/her to seek for psychological and legal assistance.
- If you are his/her lover, make him/her believe, both with your words and behavior, that s/he is important to you.
- Get professional help for yourself too.
- Don't leave him/her alone and give him/her support and help him/her decide what he/she wants in his/her life right now and remind him/her of personal responsibilities.

**When you are ready, share your experiences with other people and receive counseling services, you are welcome to apply EMU- PDRAM. EMU-PDRAM will provide you with help in this process.**

# Sexual Harassment

**Sexual harassment is being the recipient of unwelcome jokes, offers and/or insults with sexual content or being the subject of such behaviors without consent.**

Sexual harassment may include some or all of the following:

- Genital and/or other physical contact,
- Actual or attempted rape or assault,
- Using sexual content in conversation even if it does not include physical contact,
- Being the recipient of obnoxious remarks,
- Exhibitionistic attitudes, voyeurism,
- Distributing rumors with sexual content about an individual.

Sexual assault on the other hand violates a person's right to refuse being the recipient of sexual acts usually by coercion, entrapment, scaring tactics, intimidation and similar tactics of duress.

These acts towards a person that are neither wanted nor reciprocated can happen at home, school, workplace, or any other social environment. It can also happen on the virtual environment using advanced media tools by sending e-mails, pictures or notes including sexual content.

Individuals may have reservations about reporting the incidence of sexual harassment because:

- They may feel ashamed.
- They may feel that the loved ones will be ashamed about the incidence.
- Empathy by loved ones may be seen as impossible.
- They may think that nobody would believe them.
- They may be intimidated by the perpetrator.



- The incidence may be followed by threats to keep silent.
- They may be confused after experiencing the sexual harassment.
- They may self-blame by thinking that this is something that they deserve.

**Being exposed to sexual harassment or sexual assault is difficult to cope with both physically and psychologically. If this is the case;**

- First and foremost understand that this is not your fault.
- Tell this incidence to someone you trust. It can be your love interest, romantic partner, roommate, colleague, lecturer or anyone that you feel close enough to tell such an incidence.

- Take a rest and recuperate before deciding on your next step.
- Remind yourself that you have legal rights.
- If there is a medical emergency, visit a physician as soon as possible.
- Keep notes about people, time and places as reminders of what you have been through. These reminders will be helpful if you wish to pursue legal action.
- Take care of yourself. Get plenty of sleep and exercise as well as good, nutritious food.
- Consult a psychologist for further support.

**If you come across knowledge about an incidence of sexual harassment/assault to a person:**

- Believe her/him.
  - Keep calm and comforting rather than displaying exaggerated gestures and feelings.
  - Remind her/him that this is not her/his fault and s/he does not deserve this at all.
  - Give continuous and consistent support by being there when needed.
  - Let him/her know that s/he is safe, supported and understood.
  - Let him/her to share as much information as s/he is ready to share. Don't force them to say more.
  - Focus on the person's feelings, not on the details of the incidence.
  - Let him/her cry if s/he wants to.
  - Support the person during the process of learning about the legal rights and social privileges, what s/he can do and what kind of implications may result in certain decisions rather than deciding for her/him.
- Rather than judging and giving recommendations about his/her life, let the person to have the freedom to make future decisions.
  - A sexual harassment incidence may have adverse effects on the cognitive functioning of the individual (difficulty in concentration, lapse of memory etc.). Do not be judgemental. Give the person time, patience and respect to overcome this period.
  - Be more lenient about individual's lapse in performing duties and responsibilities around home, at work or school.
  - Encourage the person to seek for psychological and medical help.
  - Know that, as someone closely related to this process, you may seek psychological help for yourself as well. This may be a very difficult period for you to support and care for a person who is sexually harassed.

**Your body belongs to you. Any act or expression towards intruding your boundaries, violating you and your body is a crime. Please contact EMU-PDRAM for further information and support.**

## Self Harm - Self Injury

**“When I cut myself, I feel relief and my pain is reduced. My physical pain engulfs my emotional pain”.**

**“Even this sense of physical pain is better than the immense void inside me”.**

**“This way, I have control over my body. Nothing else in my life is within my control”.**

Self harm includes all the behaviors an individual does to knowingly and intentionally harming oneself. Individuals may not develop healthy coping skills or ability to express oneself effectively. This lack of effective coping skills may lead to self harm as a way of self expression. The main self harming behavior covered in the present section of this handbook is self injury even though alcohol and other psychoactive substance consumption, reckless driving, unprotected sexual activity are self harming behaviors too.



**The examples of self injury are:**

- Cutting or scratching skin to the point of harming,
- Hitting oneself or banging head to the wall,
- Burning self,
- Hitting objects,
- Swallowing poisonous substances or objects that are not to be swallowed,
- Knowingly preventing wounds from healing,
- Pricking skin with objects.

Self harm is an expression of unhappiness and emotional pain. Some of the causes may be related to family issues, economical problems, sexually related issues, problems with friends, culture shock, academic failure, sexual harrasment or maladjustment to the environment.

Harming self, which in itself is an unhealthy way of coping, provides a momentary feeling of wellbeing. The behaviour, accompanied by feelings of unhappiness and guilt, continues in secrecy.

This leads to the following misconceptions about the self harming individual that s/he:

- is desperately seeking attention,
- is dangerous or sick,
- wants to die,
- having superficial wounds may not be life threatening.

One or more of the following clues may be signs of self harming behavior:

- Unexplained wounds,
- Blood stained clothing and other items,
- Sharp objects in personal use of the individual,
- Accidents that occur more frequently than expected,
- A prolonged and frequent need to be alone,
- Frequent displays of anger and hostility.

### **Why would a person want to harm himself/herself?**

Self harm/self injury is a maladaptive way of coping with challenging situations which provides a temporary relief. Some of the challenging situations the individual unsuccessfully tries to cope with are:

- Unexpressed feelings,
- Presence of pain and suffering,
- Arduous life conditions,
- Feelings of guilt,
- Emotional numbness,
- Overwhelming feelings.

### **How can help be extended to someone who is self harming?**

A self injuring person hides the acts of self injury with the worry of being misunderstood. Family members and friends of someone who is self injuring should take the following suggestions into consideration during the process of helping:

- The person should be assured that s/he will not be judged,
- Sufficient time should be allocated for listening to the person and s/he should be taken seriously,
- Display an open minded and attentive attitude without rushing to find solutions,
- Be respectful to the feelings and emotions of the person,
- Continue performing shared activities,
- Encourage getting professional help.

**Please contact EMU-PDRAM for further information or support.**



# Healthy Sexuality

**Sexuality is accepting one's own sexual identity and getting physical as well as psychological satisfaction from sexual intercourse.**

**Sexual development is one of the most important stages in the development of one's identity.**

Sexuality is not only a physiological development but it is also one of the most important phases in the development of one's identity.

A person's way of thinking and living, social and professional activities, choice of friends, dressing style, etc. all are related with one's sexuality. Sexual orientation doesn't necessarily depend on one's biological sex.

**Important Things to Know about Your Sexuality**

It is important not to be embarrassed about sexual instincts and needs and to accept them as natural. It's one's foremost right to determine their sexual preferences and to figure out his/her sexual needs for him/herself.

The decisions concerning one's sexual life should be respected. Nobody has the right to force another person to have sexual intercourse or to direct another against his or her will. Sexual relationships require mutual respect and understanding.



### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

There are diseases, which are sexually transmitted. The most common way of transmission is unprotected sexual intercourse. Diseases which show up as symptoms on the sexual organs or which develop without showing any symptoms are named “sexually transmitted diseases”(STDs.). Some of these diseases are:

**Herpes:** It is caused by a kind of virus and is very contagious. Very painful scars are formed on the sexual organs. It cannot be treated but the scars can be controlled by medicine.

**Gonorrhea:** Bacteria causes gonorrhea. It can be treated by antibiotics. It can result in infertility if it is not treated.

**Syphilis:** It is caused by bacteria and can be treated by antibiotics. It can be fatal if it is not treated. It can also result in genetic defects.

**AIDS:** It is caused by HIV. This virus weakens the immune system, stops the body from defending itself against the diseases. Eventually, the immune system collapses and the person dies.

### **Protection Methods to Prevent Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

Sexuality is an adult behavior. Like all adult behaviors, it requires responsibility. The first step to avoid sexually transmitted diseases is to be cautious and not to ignore the possibility of infection. Using condoms during the sexual intercourse decreases the risk of infection to a considerable degree.

The most important factors to help avoid sexually transmitted diseases are to acquire knowledge about sexual behavior and to become aware of the symptoms.

### **FALSE beliefs about sexuality**

- Sexually transmitted diseases are caused by immoral relationships.
- Urinating after sexual intercourse provides protection from sexually transmitted diseases.
- Women who use any kind of contraceptives to avoid pregnancy can never get pregnant.
- Women and men are either homosexuals or heterosexuals.
- Masturbation results in pimples, insanity, impotence, homosexuality, balding.
- Only the young and the single people masturbate.
- The maiden head is the only indication of virginity.

- Woman whose virginity is still intact cannot get pregnant.
- Women cannot have orgasms.

**You can apply EMU-PDRAM to have more information and support for having a healthy sexuality.**

# Sexual Orientation

**Sex:** This is defined by an individual's biological characteristics such as having a penis, testis, vagina, uterus, etc. These characteristics anatomically differentiate a man from a woman.

**Gender:** This includes the behavioral characteristics and gender roles attributed to men and women according to that culture and time. In terms of behavioral characteristics these may include for instance a man being a "macho" and a woman being "submissive" as for gender roles this may include only a man being referred to as the "bread winner" and woman as

"house keeper." Gender characteristics may apply to a wide array of human behavior from hairstyles and clothes to speech and expression of emotions.

**Sexual Orientation** Refers to the emotional, romantic and sexual attraction towards another person. There are 3 types of sexual orientations:

- **Heterosexuality:** Attraction to members of the opposite sex.
- **Homosexuality:** Attraction to members of the same sex.
- **Bisexuality:** Attraction to members of both sexes.



## **Frequently Asked Questions about Homosexuality**

### **Is sexual orientation a personal choice?**

An individual's sexual orientation may develop even before having experienced any sexual relationship, during adolescence. Many people state unsuccessfully struggling to change their sexual desires for the same sex.

Despite the prejudice, derogation, feelings of fear and anxiety over rejection from family and friends, one's sexual orientation can often not be denied and changed. It is for these reasons that psychologists do not view sexual orientation as a conscious choice that can be changed at will.

### **Is homosexuality a mental illness or disorder?**

No. Psychologists, psychiatrists and mental health professionals agree that homosexuality is not an illness, mental disorder or emotional problem. In 1973, after a scientific research was conducted on the topic, The American Psychiatric Association removed 'homosexuality' from the list of mental and emotional disorders and in 1975 The American Psychological Association followed. The main reason

as to why homosexuality was referred to as a disorder was due to the fact that most homosexuals taking part in the scientific research at the time was those in therapy, part of a clinical population. Therefore, as more research was conducted with non-clinical populations, it was found that homosexuals lead healthy, well-adapted lives.

### **Can sexual orientation be reversed by therapy?**

No. Reversing sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual has no scientific basis, despite some individual (or parental) attempts to do so. In 1990, The American Psychological Association stated that this type of reverse therapy had no scientifically proven success and may in fact create more harm than good. Reversing an individual's sexual orientation not only includes changing their sexuality but also changing their emotional, romantic and sexual feelings in addition to their social identity and sense of self.

### **Why is it difficult for some homosexuals to come out?**

Due to prejudice directed towards homosexuals, “coming out” may often result in a difficult emotional experience. When homosexuals realize they are attracted to members of their own sex, they often state feelings of “loneliness” and being “different”. They may also be afraid of being rejected or disowned by family, friends, colleagues or religious institutions. In addition, there may be a fear of becoming a victim of violence and discrimination. Research suggests that homosexuals experience a high degree of violence and discrimination.

### **To what extent do homosexuals experience prejudice and discrimination?**

The prejudice and discrimination directed toward homosexuals is known as “homophobia”. This anxiety and fear can lead to negative attitudes toward homosexuals and may even result in violence. For instance, in England 2 out of every 3 homosexuals experience verbal or physical abuse. In Brazil, between 1997 and 2007, 2509 gays were murdered due to their sexual orientation. Lesbian, gay and bisexual teenagers are believed to be 4 times more likely to commit suicide than their heterosexual peers.

### **How can we overcome the prejudice and discrimination faced by homosexuals?**

Individuals with positive attitudes toward homosexuals usually state knowing at least one homosexual individual. This is why psychologists tend to believe that negative attitudes may not be a result of any negative incidents with a homosexual individual but may instead be a reflection of societal prejudice and stereotypes. One way to overcome prejudice and discrimination is to become more aware and conscious of the issues and experiences of homosexuality and correctly informing others.

### **You can apply EMU-PDRAM to have more information and support about sexual orientation.**

# The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Article 1:** All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

**Article 2:** Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

**Article 3:** Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

**Article 4:** No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

**Article 5:** No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

**Article 6:** Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

**Article 7:** All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

**Article 8:** Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent

national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

**Article 9:** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

**Article 10:** Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

**Article 11:** (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or

international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

**Article 12:** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

**Article 13:** (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

**Article 14:** (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts

contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 15:** (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

**Article 16:** (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

**Article 17:** (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

**Article 18:** Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

**Article 19:** Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

**Article 20:** (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.



**Article 21:** (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

**Article 22:** Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

**Article 23:** (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment,

to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

**Article 24:** Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

**Article 25:** (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and

the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

**Article 26:** (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or

religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

**Article 27:** (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

**Article 28:** Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

**Article 29:** (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 30:** Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

# Epilogue

**As the psychologists of EMU-PDRAM, our main aim in compiling this handbook is to inform you about some important issues regarding your relationships with yourselves as well as with other people. We also aim to inform you about the coping skills that are useful for dealing with possible challenging situations in your relationships.**

Our life experiences are very diverse to fit into the scope of this handbook. In addition, every individual can have different perceptions and coping strategies towards the challenging situations. As it was mentioned in the introduction, it is not possible to have complete control over the things that we have experienced or might experience in the future. However, handling the challenging life situations with healthy coping strategies, enhancing our relationships, improving psychological resilience and developing healthy problem solving skills are in our control.

From time to time, everyone might need to consult a psychologist and get professional advice. As EMU-PDRAM professionals, we are ready to listen to you objectively, to understand your issues and to empower you in the process of finding an appropriate solution.

Best wishes,

EMU-PDRAM Team.

## EMU-PDRAM's Other Handbooks

Personal  
Development  
HANDBOOK

Healthy Living  
without  
Addictions  
HANDBOOK

Healthy Sexuality  
HANDBOOK

Psychological  
Wellbeing  
HANDBOOK

Stop  
Violence  
HANDBOOK

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