



Information on Harassment and Sexual Misconduct for students

Introduction

Matrix College of Counselling and Psychotherapy (Matrix) is committed to fostering a safe, respectful and working environment free from any unlawful harassment (in whatever form that may take) and from sexual misconduct for all members of the College.

This document serves as a single source of information on how we prevent and respond to harassment and sexual misconduct in line with the Office for Students' (OfS) Condition of Registration on harassment and sexual misconduct (Condition E6).

It brings together relevant policies, procedures, support, reporting mechanisms and training initiatives in one place, to ensure transparency and clarity and ease of access for all students, staff and visitors.

Who does this apply to?

This document applies to all members of the Matrix community, including students, staff, placements, visitors and third parties. It covers all forms of sexual misconduct and harassment, whether it happens in person, online or in any college-related context.

What is harassment and sexual misconduct?

Harassment

The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as being 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership

- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Harassment related to these characteristics is unlawful.

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct relates to all unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. This includes but is not limited to:

- Sexual harassment (as defined by Section 26 (2) of the Equality Act 2010).
- Unwanted conduct which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).
- Assault (as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003).
- Rape (as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003).
- Physical unwanted sexual advances (as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission: Sexual harassment and the law, 2017).
- Intimidation, or promising resources or benefits in return for sexual favours (as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission: Sexual harassment and the law, 2017).
- Distributing private and personal explicit images or video footage of an individual without their consent (as defined by the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015).

These definitions include harassment and sexual misconduct through any medium, including online.

Key Policies relevant to this document

- Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy (update coming soon)
- Safeguarding policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Student and Conduct and Discipline Procedure
- Student Complaints and Grievance Procedure
- Freedom of Speech Code of Practice (update coming soon)
- Prevent Policy
- Extenuating Circumstances Policy
- Matrix Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

All these policies can be viewed at <https://matrix.ac.uk/compliance/>

Reporting and Disclosure

Matrix recognises that reporting incidents of sexual misconduct and harassment can be difficult for many individuals.

Anyone can make a report concerning something they have experienced, witnessed or been made aware of. Reports can be made anonymously if wished.

Sometimes people aren't sure what they want to do - we encourage students to talk to their personal counsellor or their supervisor (if they are undertaking clinical work) to gain support and help deciding what their options are.

Reports will be dealt with sensitively, discreetly and as quickly as possible. Care will be taken to respect the need for confidentiality at every stage if this is possible. (Please see Matrix Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct, section D 1.8)

What happens following a report being made will depend on what exactly is reported, the information provided, and what the reporter wants to happen next. Anonymous reports cannot normally be investigated, but for other reports please see below for who to contact and what procedure will be followed

Complaint	Who to report to	Which process will be followed
From a student against a student	Contact your Programme Lead	Student Conduct and Discipline Policy
From student about a member of staff or a third party	Contact Fiona Paul, Principal. If the complaint is about the Principal, contact the External Moderator	Student Complaints and Grievance Procedure
From staff members about a student	Contact Fiona Paul, Principal	Student Conduct and Discipline Policy

Contact details are at the end of this document

Other organisations

Placement providers are issued guidance on who to contact at Matrix if a student is experiencing harassment or sexual misconduct at their placement. Students are encouraged to report concerns to Matrix via the Placement Manager. A member of staff will liaise with the placement provider to support the student and to determine whether case was appropriately managed in order to inform decisions on whether we would continue to place students with that organisation in the future.

Support for those affected by harassment and sexual misconduct

Students who disclose incidents of harassment or sexual misconduct are supported by the personal counsellor and their Programme Lead.

In cases of bullying and harassment Citizens Advice provide information around bullying and harassment and ACAS have a helpline for workers who need support around bullying and harassment at work. In cases of sexual misconduct as well as your personal counsellor and Programme Lead, Sexual Assault Referral Centres offer medical, practical and emotional support. You can use a post code search facility to find your nearest SARC or you can call NHS 111.

Sexual Violence:

- [Rape Crisis](#) To access help if you've experienced rape, child sexual abuse or any kind of sexual violence, or if you need details of local Rape Crisis services. They also offer information about sexual violence for survivors, people supporting survivors (including men and boys), and information about their work.
- [Survivor's Network](#) They are fully accredited members of Rape Crisis England and Wales. They offer professional relevant services to survivors of any gender aged 14+ who have experienced any form of sexual violence. They have helplines for people who self-identify as women, for people who identify as trans, non-binary and support and referral services for men and boys. Only Brighton residents can use their Counselling and ISVA services, but the drop-ins and helplines are open to anyone.
- [Live Fear Free](#): 24hr support for victims of domestic violence and sexual violence.
- [Safeline](#): Specialised charity working to prevent sexual abuse and to support those affected in their recovery.
Male Helpline: 0808 800 5005
General Helpline: 0808 800 5008
- [The Survivors Trust](#): Rape and sexual abuse can happen to anyone regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, culture or social status. Living with the consequences of rape and sexual abuse can be devastating. All survivors are entitled to receive the best possible response to their needs whether or not they choose to report.
- [Women Against Rape](#): Based on self-help. They provide support, legal information and advocacy; and campaign for justice and protection for all women and girls, including asylum seekers, who have suffered sexual, domestic and/or racist violence.

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

- [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#): Run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge, this is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf. The Helpline can give

support, help and information over the telephone, wherever the caller might be in the country.

- [Refuge](#): Largest domestic abuse organisation in the UK. On any given day their services support thousands of women and their children, helping them to overcome the physical, emotional, financial and logistical impacts of abuse and rebuild their lives — free from fear.
- [Women's Aid](#): National domestic violence charity that helps up to 250,000 women and children every year. They work to end violence against women and children, and support over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the country.

Male Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse Victim-Survivors:

- [Mankind UK](#): Male rape support and resource service for men who have been sexually abused, assaulted, raped. National UK charity based in East Sussex offering telephone helpline, counselling and support, one to one, groups and support for partners and families.
- [Survivors UK](#): Helps male survivors of childhood sexual abuse and adult sexual assault/rape. They can offer a range of support services including counselling and therapy appointments as well as online chat. All services are provided by trained professionals. They welcome anyone who identifies as male, trans, non-binary, has identified as male in the past, or anyone who feels that they are the right fit for them.
- [Men's Advice Line UK](#): The Helpline for male victims of domestic abuse.
- [IDAS](#): Most domestic abuse is directed at women and girls, but men can also be victims of domestic abuse, both in gay and straight relationships. They support hundreds of men every year, helping them overcome the harmful impacts of being subject to abuse.
- [Safeline](#): A dedicated service for men and boys in England and Wales affected by sexual violence and abuse and those who support them.

Matrix is not responsible for the content of external sites. If you believe that any of these support services should not be promoted or you have a suggestion for an additional support service, please let us know.

Matrix further supports students who find that their academic studies are impacted by experience of harassment or sexual misconduct. Such experiences are regarded as 'exceptional circumstances' and therefore an appropriate adjustment may be made. Please see the Extenuating Circumstance policy. Adjustments, such as extensions can be requested without the need to provide detailed statements or evidence about their experience.

Investigating

Matrix is committed to conducting a fair and transparent process when considering student and staff complaints and disciplinary issues. Allegations are handled sensitively and with appropriate confidentiality, and students are supported throughout the process

The following policies are relevant to how we investigate allegations of harassment and sexual misconduct:

- Student Conduct and Discipline Policy
- Student Complaints and Grievance Procedure

Monitoring

Data Collection and Monitoring

We are committed to collecting and monitoring data on incidents of harassment and sexual misconduct to identify trends, improve our response mechanisms, and support continuous improvement in our policies and practices.

The data is collected by the Principal.

Training

Students

New students are introduced to Matrix's expectations on behaviour during Unit 1. Training on harassment, sexual consent and sexual misconduct forms a mandatory part of Unit 2 for all students each year. The training is provided as a recorded session and is available on Moodle.

Guidance Matrix's specific policies and processes is delivered to all current students on Unit 1 each year.

Staff

Specific training on harassment and sexual misconduct is given to all Matrix staff. The training focusses on understanding harassment, sexual misconduct and responding to disclosures.

This training on harassment and sexual misconduct for students is also provided to staff.

All tutors are very experienced Psychotherapists or Psychotherapeutic Counsellors either registered with the UKCP or Accredited with the BACP, including both the Head of Training and Principal (who also teach). As such, all are trained in recognising and responding appropriately to disclosures of harassment and sexual misconduct. In addition, they are experienced in dealing with complex, difficult and sensitive situations.

Personal relationships

Sexual relationship between staff and student are **prohibited** as per the Matrix Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct:

- *2.5 Tutors are responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries between themselves and students, so that working relationships are not confused with other relationships.*

- *2.7 Tutors must not exploit students financially, sexually, emotionally, or in any other way. Sexual relationships with students are unethical and are prohibited.*

Freedom of Speech

Matrix protects and encourages free speech and academic freedom within the law for its staff and students. Our Freedom of Speech Code of Practice been produced to ensure that as far as reasonably practicable, freedom of speech within the law is secured for, students, staff, members and visiting speakers and that academic freedom is secured for relevant staff and job applicants.

The Matrix starting point is that lawful speech will be permitted. Free speech includes lawful speech that may be offensive and/or hurtful to some. Unlawful speech is not protected and is not covered under the provisions of the Code. Examples of unlawful speech may include: unlawful discrimination and harassment, criminal offences and defamation.

Exposure of students to course materials, statements made and views expressed by a person as part of teaching, or discussions about any subject matter that is connected with the content of our course, are unlikely to constitute 'harassment', unless otherwise demonstrated that these matters do in fact amount to harassment.

Please see the Matrix Freedom of Speech Code of Practice (currently being updated)

Staff contacts

Principal	fiona@matrix.ac.uk	01953 797160
Head of Training	ian@matrix.ac.uk	01953 797160
Placement Manager	mailto:katherine@matrix.ac.uk	01953 797160

External Moderator, Martin Weaver - martin@lifetidetraining.co.uk