



INFORMATION BOOKLET



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Information Booklet

GENDER & SEXUALITY EDITION



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2022 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Survey Highlights

- Approximately 1 in 3 male and 4 in 5 female international students have experienced some form of gender-based or sexual harassment, abuse, or violence in the northern part of Cyprus. This is even higher among those who don't identify as male or female.
- Unwanted touching or physical contact is the most common form of sexual harassment experienced by international students and occurs most frequently in public places.
- 2 in 3 international students working in the northern part of Cyprus have experienced inappropriate behaviour from an employer or coworker.
- 1 in 2 international students have considered leaving the northern part of Cyprus due to sexual harassment/violence.



'Domestic Violence Laws' in the northern part of Cyprus

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is any incident or pattern that involves controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse among persons aged 16 and above who are or have been intimate partners or family members. ('Resmi Gazete', 2021)

This abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.

What should you do in instances of domestic violence?

If you or anyone you know is a victim of domestic violence, a protection order against the abuser can be obtained from a 'court' with a unilateral petition (ex parte application) using a self-help kit provided by KAYAD - an organization established with the aim of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women - that can be obtained from their center located at Okullar Yolu Sk, Küçük Kaymaklı, Nicosia or via [+903922270751](tel:+903922270751) or info@kayad.org. The petition can also be obtained by applying to the Violence Prevention and Counseling Center under the Gender Equality Department at the nearest 'police station' and requesting a protection order application on their behalf.

This can be done without a lawyer and without the knowledge of the person against whom the protection order is given until the completion of the process.

As there is no need to submit evidence in family 'court', applications made to the 'court' for protection orders shall be evaluated as soon as possible and issued immediately if the 'court' considers the situation to be potentially or already abusive. Regardless of the outcome, the decision on the protection order will be communicated to the applicant as soon as possible.

If granted, the protection order will clearly specify the identity and address of the person(s) against whom the order has been given, the form and duration of the order, and that the person(s) against whom the order is given will be arrested and prosecuted if they do not fulfil the requirements of the decision.

The 'court' may issue any of the following protection orders it deems appropriate:

- Prohibition on entering the residence, immovable property, school or workplace of the party by the other party against whom the protection order has been given, other parties or their family members;
- Prohibit the party against whom the protection order has been issued, other parties, or family members from approaching within two hundred meters;
- Prohibition of the party against whom the protection order is given from communicating with the other party, family members and children, if any, by using written, verbal, telephone, digital, or other means of communication;
- Making, limiting, or removing the personal relationship of the party against whom the protection order is given with any children, with the support of an accompanying person; and
- If the person against whom a protection order has been given has a licensed firearm or carries a firearm due to his duty, he is prohibited from possessing and/or carrying a firearm and delivers the licensed weapon to the 'general directorate of police' or to the institution where he is assigned as a part of his duty.

Any person with a protection order against them who does not fulfil the requirements of the order will be committing a crime. Even if the act of them doing so constitutes another crime, acting contrary to the protection order is punishable with fines of up to ten times the minimum wage, imprisonment of up to eighteen months, or both. In practice, this means that if someone violates a protection order against them by breaking into an apartment, they will be charged separately for the breaking and entering and violating the protection order,

Sexual Assault and Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance that is offensive, humiliating, intimidating and includes requests for sexual favors. It can be written, verbal or physical, and can happen in person or online. Sexual harassment is a much broader term than sexual assault and refers to a wider variety of inappropriate sexual behaviors and so some cases of sexual harassment can also amount to sexual assault (RAINN Organization, 2017).

Anyone can encounter sexual harassment, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. When it happens at work, school, or in public, sexual harassment may even amount to a form of discrimination.

The following are behaviors that are considered **Sexual Harassment:**

- Unwanted pressure for sexual favors.
- Unwanted deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching.
- Unwanted sexual looks or gestures.
- Unwanted letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature.
- Unwanted pressure for dates.
- Unwanted sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions.
- Whistling at someone/catcalls.
- Unwelcome sexual comments, innuendos, or stories.

Sexual consent means **actively agreeing to be sexual/physical with someone**. Pertaining to the context of sexual relations, consent lets someone know that the act is wanted and welcome. Consent can be withdrawn at any point or denied entirely, regardless of whether or not it had been given at any point in the past. Consent is:

- **Freely given:** Consent should be freely given and come from a decision made without pressure, manipulation, or influence from alcohol or drugs.
- **Reversible:** You can change your mind about what you feel like doing, anytime.
- **Informed:** Only if you are fully informed can you give your agreement to something.
- **Enthusiastic:** Only engage in activities that you DESIRE to do.
- **Specific:** Accepting something doesn't necessarily equal accepting everything.

Sexual activity without consent is rape or sexual assault, which occurs when someone is forced, coerced, or swindled into performing some form of sexual activity. For example, if an instructor or colleague forces you to kiss them or touches you inappropriately without your consent, it is a case of both sexual harassment and sexual assault.

What to do in cases of sexual assault?

- **First step is to make sure you are safe: You might want to go to a friend's house or find someone who can help you.**
- **Leave Your Body As Is:** It is best to leave everything on your body as is; don't take a shower or bath or wash off any parts of your body. If you change your clothes, take the clothes you were wearing during the assault to the hospital or 'police department' in a paper bag.
- **Get Medical Treatment:** It is important for your health and safety to get a medical examination right away.
- **Decide if You Want to Talk to the 'police':** This is highly recommended so you can regain a sense of control over your life. They will receive your testimony and start their investigation. You don't need to provide any evidence that the assault has taken place; that is what the 'police' investigation is for.

Sexual Assault and Harassment

- We believe you
- You did not cause the assault to happen – no matter what the circumstances
- Coming forward, or speaking about the assault with someone you trust, is a brave and courageous thing to do.
- Free and confidential help is available, regardless of any police involvement or when the assault took place.
- It may help to speak with someone, whether it be a counsellor or others in group therapy.

Note: (If legal or psychological assistance is needed, VOIS Cyprus can provide support in liaison with other NGOs, such as KAYAD and the Women's Shelter, that offer such services).

How VOIS contributes

- VOIS Safe Space: This is an online support system for survivors of rape.
- Medical and legal representation in liaison with other NGOs like KAYAD and the Women's Shelter.
- Counselling: This is carried out by experts. The procedure is trustworthy and confidential.
- Physical support: Throughout this procedure, a VOIS representative will be by your side, ensuring that you never feel alone.

Note: If you have been a victim of a sexual assault or domestic violence and are in need of a temporary place to stay, VOIS is able to assist you in collaboration with the Women's Shelter in Nicosia. All you have to do is reach out.

LGBTI+ Terminology and Awareness

Sexual relationships between same-sex individuals were decriminalised in the northern part of Cyprus on 27 January in 2014.

- **Gender:** Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.
- **Gender Identity:** is each person's internal and individual experiences of gender. It is a person's sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be same as or different from their birth-assigned sex.
- **Sexual Orientation:** It refers to the emotional, romantic and physical attraction towards people with specific gender identity/identities.
- **Homosexual:** A woman or man who is emotionally/sexually attracted to the same sex.
- **Gay:** It refers to homosexual men. In the Turkish language, although it was initially used to refer to both homosexual women and men, today only homosexual men use the term to express themselves. However, in the English language, the word "gay" is used in daily conversations while referring to both sexes.
- **Lesbian:** It refers to homosexual women.
- **Bisexual:** It refers to anyone who is emotionally/sexually attracted to both sexes. Bisexual individuals may not be equally attracted to both sexes and the level of attraction may vary in time. It does not mean being attracted to both a woman and a man at the same time or being in a relationship with two individuals at the same time.
- **Heterosexual:** It refers to women or men who are emotionally/sexually attracted to the opposite sex. Heterosexuality is automatically and obligatorily the dominant orientation in society. Since heterosexuality is considered the "norm" in society and individuals are accepted as heterosexuals unless otherwise stated, heterosexual individuals don't feel the need to define themselves as heterosexual.

The Queer Cyprus Solidarity Line aims to answer questions about LGBTI+ struggle, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Identities of the callers will be kept confidential and will only be used by the volunteers who have received a comprehensive training. In the Solidarity Line, there will be no psychological support and the individuals will be directed to the experts about all questions that require expertise.

Working Hours of the Line: The free solidarity line can be reached at +90 542 858 5847 (KUIR). You can reach the line 7 days a week between 10:00 & 22:00 by making a direct call to the active phone line, online applications and/or texting a SMS message.

In addition, Queer Cyprus Association offers psychological and counseling as well as a social welfare program for members of the LGBTI+ community.

Reproductive Rights?

What are reproductive rights?

These are the rights of individuals to decide whether to reproduce and have reproductive health. This may include an individual's right to plan a family, terminate a pregnancy, use contraceptives, learn about sex education in public schools, and gain access to reproductive health services.

What is abortion?

Abortion occurs when a pregnancy is ended so that it doesn't result in the birth of a child. Abortion is legal in the northern part of Cyprus in pregnancies up to 10 weeks. Generally, the pregnancy week is calculated from the date of last menstrual period and the pregnancy week calculated through ultrasound match. Sometimes people are not accurate about the date of their last menstrual period or they accept the date when they find out they are pregnant as the starting date of pregnancy and this may cause inconsistency in terms of pregnancy weeks.

These conditions are delineated by the 'Article 28 of the 1983 Law on the Turkish Cypriot Medical Association', and no limit is set for abortion under the aforementioned circumstances. Anyone who exceeds the time limit of 10 weeks can be imprisoned for a maximum of 3 years. In addition, an intentional miscarriage after this limit using, for instance, a poison or a specific material can result in imprisonment for up to 7 years.

General information about abortions:

- To get one, you have to visit a private hospital and request one from a gynaecologist because despite being legal, abortion procedures cannot be performed in public hospitals.
- It is enough for unmarried women who are aged over 18 years to give consent themselves.

- If the woman is married, the spouse of the married woman must give consent to intervention.
- In young girls aged under 18 years, her mother or father must give consent to the intervention.

What is contraception?

Contraception is the act of preventing pregnancy. This can be done through a device, medication, procedure, or any other behaviours intended to prevent egg fertilisation.

What types of contraceptives available?

- The Condom
- The Oral Contraceptive Pill
- Intrauterine Device (IUD)
- The Contraceptive Implant
- The Contraceptive Injection
- Emergency Contraception Pill (The 'Morning After' Pill)
- Contraceptive Ring
- Diaphragm

Childbirth

Information on processes in childbirth for foreigners vary. However, this is usually done either through natural birth or caesarean section and costs upward of 200 EUR depending on the hospital.



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Gender-Based Issues

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