

HELP@HAND TEAM

RAISING CONCERNS for PhD and postdoctoral researchers

From the TRAIN@CBM committee, we intend to support all PhD and postdoctoral researchers during their trajectory at CBM not only at a scientific level but also contributing to create a friendly and positive environment. Occasionally, PhD or postdocs may experience misunderstandings with other lab members or even the group leader which may lead to distress.

At the CBM we have established a team to manage critical interactions with a perspective to engage with the vulnerable part, most of the time the students. We want to create a space for support and discussion to provide confidential and neutral feedback and restore, when possible, a peaceful environment.

Claudio Toma (claudio.toma@cbm.csic.es) and Cati Ribas (cribas@cbm.csic.es) from the TRAIN@CBM committee are the persons who will help suggest unbiased points of view on potential conflicts or abnormal situations. The team is NOT meant to take any formal action but can help mediate amongst researchers involved, and in severe cases ask for help from offices in charge of misconduct and other behaviours.

The aims are to:

- Provide confidential, neutral, independent, and informal assistance to all CBM PhD and postdoctoral researchers who have concerns arising from or affecting their work
- Prevent conflict and restoring peaceful working relations, offering an important in-house alternative to formal complaint-handling
- Advocate for fair and equitable application of procedures and offers a portfolio of tailor-made informal conflict resolution services which strive to reach amicable and sustainable solutions acceptable to all parties and which foster respectable workplace principles and values
- Act with strict confidentiality, not revealing anyone's identity, or taking any action without the prior consent of the individual concerned
- Not to testify or produce documents in formal proceedings. Formal records are not kept, and any communications with us will be kept confidential
- Not to receive notice of claims against the organization or conduct investigations
- Not to act as a substitute for formal channels

This figure has no management authority and cannot create or change policy, or impose any given solution, but it will identify systemic trends and risks that can help promote a more respectful and harmonious workplace. At the end of each calendar year, an anonymized annual report will be created including general caseload statistics, an analysis of trends and recommendations for the future.

Activities included:

- Impartial and active listening
- Evaluating available options
- Providing information and making referrals
- Informal fact finding
- Conflict coaching
- Shuttle diplomacy
- Mediation
- Confidentiality
- Upward feedback