

ViDaB Lab Code of Conduct

It takes a team of people working together to produce good science. Too often, the difficult task of conducting research is made more difficult due to an unwelcome or even toxic lab environment. Here in the ViDaB Lab we work to create an inclusive and welcoming environment that promotes a healthy work-life integration where all participants feel valued and where the science is productive, and fun! We want to ensure that every lab member and collaborator has a positive, educational experience that produces quality research that is not hindered by non-inclusive behavior.

Accordingly, everyone who participates in any ViDaB Lab project is expected to always show respect and courtesy to other community members.

Dr. Alex J. Veglia, as head of the ViDaB Lab, and all lab members, are dedicated to a harassment and discrimination-free experience for everyone. Unlawful discrimination or harassment based on racial or ethnic background, citizenship status, religion (or lack thereof), political affiliation, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, dis/ability status, appearance or body size will not be tolerated. This is also in accordance with the University of Puerto Rico non-discrimination policy ([Certification 130; 2014-15](#)).

We do not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination in any form. We are particularly motivated to support and collaborate with people who are looking to learn and develop their skills (both research and communication tools), and we welcome anyone who may have experienced discrimination in the past.

Expectations of the ViDaB Lab include:

- All communication - online and in person - should be appropriate for a professional audience including people of many different backgrounds. Sexual or discriminatory language and imagery is not appropriate at any time.
- Be kind to others. Do not insult or put down others, including community members outside the Lab.
- Behave professionally. Remember that harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary jokes are never appropriate.
- Make an effort to create an inclusive environment for everyone. Give everyone a chance to talk and an opportunity to contribute.
- Watch out for your own microaggressions and be aware that your actions

can be hurtful to others or contribute to a negative environment even if you had no intent of harm.

- If someone brings up an issue with a behavior or negative work environment, listen. Commit to learning and doing better.

Unacceptable behavior includes offensive verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, dis/ability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion (or lack of), sexual images, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing, unauthorized photography or recording, sustained disruption of discussions, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.

To report an issue, you have several options:

1. For minor offenses, you may contact Dr. Alex Veglia (alex.veglia@upr.edu) or Report a Bias through the Office of the Student Ombudsperson, and the Office of the Dean of Students. Any Lab participants asked to stop any harassing or discriminatory behavior are expected to comply immediately. Dr. Veglia will work with the Office of the Student Ombudsperson and/or Dean of Students to complete both formal and informal investigations, where appropriate. If inappropriate behavior persists after a discussion with Dr. Veglia, the participant will be removed from the project and the issue will be escalated according to procedures laid out by the [UPRM Non Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policies](#).

2. For offenses of sexual misconduct or sexual violence, please realize that Dr. Veglia and all University staff are “responsible employees” according to the UPRM Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination Policies. A responsible employee must report to the Title IX Office all relevant details about the alleged sexual violence shared by the victim including the names of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s), any witnesses, and any other relevant facts, including the date, time and specific location of the alleged incident. The Title IX office must be made aware of such issues. A responsible employee will not share information with law enforcement without the victim’s consent or unless the victim has also reported the incident to law enforcement.

3. The University maintains a [Student Ombudsman Service](#) that can help navigate and provide confidential advice for a wide variety of situations.

By signing below, you confirm that you have read and agree to the ViDaB Lab Code of Conduct.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note: ViDaB Lab Code of Conduct August 2024 was adapted with permission from MADDReptiles Lab UPRM. Portions of this document were inspired by and adapted from the [Kohl Lab](#) & [Keiser Lab](#) mentoring documents.