

# Multidisciplinary work and ethical approaches in rehabilitation services

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## Introduction

Addiction is a complex condition that affects not only individuals but also their families and society. For this reason, treatment and rehabilitation services require a multidimensional approach that extends beyond the scope of any single discipline. Multidisciplinary teams—comprising psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, counselors, and family members—play a central role in effective addiction treatment and rehabilitation.

In Turkey, the Green Crescent Counseling Centers (YEDAM) exemplify rehabilitation approach through a holistic service model that integrates psychological counseling, social work support, family-focused interventions, and medical referrals when necessary. The coordinated efforts of different professional disciplines support both individual recovery and broader social reintegration. However, the effectiveness of this structure depends not only on technical expertise but also on strong ethical foundations. Principles such as confidentiality, autonomy, and justice are essential for sustaining trust and legitimacy in multidisciplinary rehabilitation services.

Within the Turkish context, the legal framework provides a critical basis for defining ethical and institutional boundaries in addiction services. Services delivered by YEDAM and similar institutions are governed by the Law on the Protection of Personal Data (KVKK), under which health data are classified as “special category personal data.” Accordingly, client information is protected through explicit consent, strict data security measures, and limited data sharing. Information exchange within multidisciplinary teams is conducted only to the extent required for service provision and within professional responsibility.

Although legislation may mandate reporting in cases involving serious risk to the individual or others, addiction treatment in Turkey is fundamentally based on voluntariness. The client's informed consent and active participation remain central, while compulsory interventions are limited to exceptional situations with clear legal justification and a focus on the

individual's best interest. Thus, addiction rehabilitation in Turkey is largely shaped by a rights-based, confidentiality-oriented, and voluntary framework.

## The Importance of Multidisciplinary Work

A multidisciplinary approach addresses the biological, psychological, and social dimensions of addiction in an integrated manner.

- Medical dimension: Diagnosis, pharmacological treatment, and physical health monitoring.
- Psychological dimension: Individual therapy, group interventions, and motivational interviewing.
- Social dimension: Family support, educational and occupational integration, and social reintegration.

Rather than focusing solely on symptom reduction, this integrated model aims to enhance overall functioning and quality of life. Clear role definitions, shared treatment goals, and regular case discussions form the operational backbone of effective multidisciplinary collaboration.

At YEDAM, professionals from different disciplines work in coordination and maintain active collaboration with external institutions such as hospitals and social service agencies when necessary. This inter-institutional cooperation supports continuity of care and strengthens social integration, while strict attention to confidentiality ensures the protection of client trust throughout the process.

## Ethical Approaches

Ethical principles are fundamental to the credibility and effectiveness of rehabilitation services.

- Confidentiality and privacy: Client information must be shared only with authorized parties and strictly within professional boundaries.

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- **Autonomy and respect:** Clients' decisions should be respected, and coercive practices should be avoided whenever possible.
- **Justice:** Equal and non-discriminatory access to services must be ensured.
- **Benefit–harm balance:** Interventions should be evaluated in terms of potential benefits and risks, with priority given to minimizing harm.

International standards further reinforce these principles. The American Society of Addiction Medicine emphasizes that addiction treatment should be guided by ethical commitments that prioritize autonomy, confidentiality, and justice (American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), 2024). Similarly, effective multidisciplinary rehabilitation requires not only technical collaboration but also a shared ethical responsibility. Without principles such as confidentiality, autonomy, and justice, patient rights and dignity cannot be fully protected (Ohayon & Ronel, 2025).

Importantly, ethical sensitivity should not be limited to individual professional conduct; it must be embedded within institutional culture.

## Ethical Challenges in YEDAM and Rehabilitation Institutions

Different service models in Turkey encounter distinct ethical challenges.

- **Community-based services (e.g., YEDAM):** Balancing client autonomy with family involvement and expectations is a central ethical concern.
- **Residential or long-term rehabilitation settings:** Issues related to autonomy, privacy, and power dynamics may become more pronounced, particularly when institutional rules conflict with individual preferences.

Additionally, fear of stigmatization and concerns about treatment records being included in official systems may reduce treatment adherence. These factors underscore the critical ethical role of confidentiality and privacy in sustaining engagement with addiction services (Akkaya et al., 2025).

Addressing these challenges requires systematic ethics training, institutional ethics committees, and regular professional supervision.

## Conclusion

Addiction rehabilitation is not solely a clinical practice but also a field in which ethical responsibility, human rights, and social justice are actively realized. Multidisciplinary collaboration strengthens individual well-being by integrating biological, psychological, and social perspectives; however, its sustainability depends on a robust ethical and legal foundation. In community-based centers such as YEDAM, the protection of voluntariness, confidentiality, and autonomy is directly linked to public trust in services.

To enhance the quality of addiction services in Turkey, several policy-oriented steps may be taken. These include the development of standardized ethical guidelines for all professional groups involved in multidisciplinary teams and the integration of ethical decision-making modules specific to sensitive fields such as addiction into higher education curricula. Ethics education models that combine theoretical knowledge with case-based learning and supervision would further strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration.

At the national level, clearly defined and regularly updated ethical and professional standards for addiction rehabilitation services are needed to ensure consistency across public and non-governmental organizations while safeguarding client rights. Looking ahead, the expansion of inter-institutional collaboration, improvements in digital data security, and stronger community-based preventive strategies are likely to shape the future of addiction services in Turkey. Ultimately, the success of these developments depends on embedding ethical sensitivity as a core component of institutional practice, thereby promoting not only individual recovery but also social trust and cohesion.

## Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new datasets were generated or analyzed during this study.

## Conflict of interest

The author declares that this study was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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The authors declare that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used in the writing or preparation of this study.

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