



**The Relational Harm Index**  
Quantifying Invisible Wounds in the Human Experience

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## Executive Summary (Abstract)

The *Relational Harm Index (RHI)* white paper introduces a new conceptual framework for quantifying and addressing non-criminal emotional injuries, such as betrayal, abandonment, or manipulation. These are invisible wounds often overlooked by legal, medical, and technological systems. As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly integrated into social infrastructure, the need for ethical models that can recognize and respond to emotional and relational harm becomes urgent.

This paper proposes the development of the RHI as a structured system, initially theoretical but potentially implementable, that could be used to assess and respond to these forms of harm. By modeling, scoring, and contextualizing relational injuries, the RHI seeks to lay the groundwork for a more compassionate and intelligent society.

We envision the RHI as a bridge between policy, technology, and human well-being: a first step toward building systems (both AI- and human-led) capable of meaningfully acknowledging harm that is deeply felt yet rarely recognized. This is not only a proposal for advancing healthcare or justice, but also it is a contribution toward the ethical evolution of humanity.

## Introduction

Modern society operates within systems designed to maintain order, protect rights, and deter harm. Yet a persistent and often unaddressed gap remains: emotional and relational injuries, such as betrayal, manipulation, or abandonment, can leave lasting scars without ever crossing a legal threshold. These harms, while intangible to institutions, are deeply felt by individuals and communities, often triggering ripple effects across families, workplaces, and digital spaces.

In the absence of formal recognition or redress, individuals may seek informal justice, through retaliation, withdrawal, or public shaming, to rebalance their internal sense of fairness. Others may carry the weight silently, with unresolved emotional wounds manifesting later as burnout, depression, or fractured relationships. These responses are not merely personal; they reflect the unmet need for acknowledgment and repair in a system that sees only the measurable.

This disconnect is more than a moral oversight, it is a design flaw in how modern systems handle harm. As AI becomes more deeply embedded in legal processes, digital platforms, and emotional support technologies, the inability to recognize relational injury becomes a growing liability. AI cannot be expected to mediate fairly if it inherits the same blind spots that pervade human institutions.

To move forward, we must develop tools that can translate the language of emotion into structured insight, without diminishing its nuance. This white paper introduces the Relational Harm Index (RHI), a conceptual framework designed to surface and organize forms of harm that are often dismissed or misunderstood. It is not a replacement for law or therapy, but a bridge, linking subjective pain to ethical awareness, and social fairness to technological possibility.

## Defining the Problem

While legal systems provide frameworks for addressing many forms of harm, physical injury, financial loss, contractual breach, they often fall short in cases of emotional or relational harm. These are the kinds of damages rooted in non-criminal emotional injuries, experiences that can deeply impact individuals but are rarely recognized in formal structures of justice. This disconnect between emotionally significant harm and legal recognition leaves a void that society has yet to fill meaningfully. Philosophical scholars have begun exploring the concept of relational harm (Miller, 2022), reinforcing the urgency of acknowledging emotional injuries that fall outside traditional legal and medical frameworks.

Existing institutions tend to overlook or undervalue these forms of harm because they are difficult to quantify. The subjective nature of emotional pain means it lacks standard metrics. For instance, courts routinely assign monetary damages for physical injuries with measurable outcomes. Yet they rarely account for the enduring emotional fallout from events like infidelity, social exclusion, or public shaming. Dismissed as ‘personal issues’ or ‘private matters,’ these injuries often trigger ripple effects in the form of reduced workplace engagement, deteriorating mental health, and strained relationships.

One of the most corrosive consequences of such unacknowledged harm is the erosion of trust. Trust, once broken, often does not return to its original state. Whether in a marriage, a team environment, or a broader community, breaches of relational integrity can fracture cohesion in ways that no legal remedy can repair. People may remain in relationships or organizations, but they do so cautiously, warily, with protective mechanisms that inhibit full participation and collaboration. This invisible damage often metastasizes, resulting in disengagement, chronic conflict, or isolation.

When the harmed party finds no pathway to acknowledgment or restitution, they may respond in unhealthy or destructive ways. Some seek retribution directly. Others internalize the injustice, which festers as chronic stress, depression, or pessimism. In either case, society pays a hidden cost, whether through decreased social cohesion, mental health deterioration, or even increased criminality that stems from unresolved emotional injury. These ripple effects underscore the need to recognize and address non-legal forms of harm as legitimate and impactful.

To confront these challenges, we must consider frameworks that respect the complexity of emotional harm while remaining practical and adaptable. The Relational Harm Index (RHI) aims to fill this gap, not by replacing legal systems, but by complementing them. It offers a structured lens through which society can identify, understand, and communicate the scope of non-physical harm in a consistent way. This shift is crucial in an era where AI, digital platforms, and increasingly fragmented human relationships amplify both our ability to cause harm and our difficulty in seeing it clearly.

## The Concept of a Relational Harm Index (RHI)

### Purpose of the Framework

With a clearer understanding of the social and psychological costs of relational harm, the next step is to conceptualize a model capable of making this invisible damage more visible. The Relational Harm Index (RHI) provides a structured approach to identifying and quantifying non-criminal emotional injuries. It is designed to assist individuals, mental health professionals, mediators, and AI systems in assessing harm that may not be legally actionable but still demands recognition, validation, or response. Moral injury research underscores this need, showing how systemic or relational betrayals can cause profound psychological harm even in the absence of physical injury or legal violation (Rabin & Barnett, 2023).

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### Scoring Model Overview

- **Scale:** 0–5 per category
  - **0** = No harm
  - **1** = Minimal
  - **2** = Mild
  - **3** = Moderate
  - **4** = Significant
  - **5** = Severe
- **Total Score:** Sum of scores across all categories
- **Maximum Possible RHI Score:** 50 points

This scale is intentionally capped at 50 to provide a clean, recognizable benchmark for assessing total relational harm.

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### Scoring Categories (Each rated 0–5)

1. **Trust Erosion** – Extent to which the harmed party’s trust was violated or broken.
2. **Psychological Distress** – Emotional or mental suffering resulting from the event.
3. **Social Impact** – Repercussions to social standing, relationships, or community inclusion.
4. **Perceived Injustice** – Degree of perceived unfairness or betrayal.
5. **Loss of Autonomy** – Reduction in the harmed party’s control, freedom, or agency.

6. **Relational Disruption** – Damage to the quality or longevity of the relationship.
7. **Moral Injury** – Violation of the harmed party’s personal ethical or moral framework.
8. **Identity Harm** – Attack on or erosion of the harmed party’s self-concept or dignity.
9. **Isolation or Exclusion** – Degree to which the harmed party was ostracized or disconnected.
10. **Unacknowledged Harm** – Lack of recognition, apology, or validation of the harm caused.

These ten scoring dimensions capture the key relational and emotional domains most affected by non-physical harm.

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## **Interpretation Ranges**

### **Score Range Interpretation**

0–10	Low relational harm – minimal consequences
11–25	Moderate relational harm – potential concern
26–40	High relational harm – requires active repair
41–50	Critical relational harm – likely lasting and severe impact

These ranges provide a flexible guide for interpreting scores and prioritizing appropriate interventions.

*For a detailed example of how the RHI can be applied in a real-world scenario, see the upcoming section: Applications and Policy in Society.*

# AI's Role in Recognition and Mediation

## Extending Fairness Through Technology

As society seeks better ways to measure and manage relational harm, artificial intelligence presents a unique opportunity, not to replace human empathy, but to extend fairness, consistency, and clarity into emotionally complex situations. The Relational Harm Index (RHI), though inherently subjective, becomes more powerful when AI is tasked with applying it objectively.

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## Impartiality in Application

Humans often struggle to assess harm without bias. When personally affected, individuals may overstate harm to validate their emotions or understate it to avoid conflict. Even well-intentioned professionals, such as therapists or mediators, bring their own cognitive frameworks and limitations to the table.

AI systems, by contrast, offer a standardized and emotionally neutral implementation of the RHI. By applying the same criteria uniformly, AI can reduce inconsistencies, surface overlooked dimensions of harm, and provide a structured form of acknowledgment, especially in contexts where traditional justice mechanisms fall short.

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## Core Capabilities

Several AI capabilities make it uniquely positioned to support the recognition and mediation of relational harm:

- **Natural Language Processing (NLP):** Enables AI to parse written and spoken language for signs of relational harm, including tone, context, and implied sentiment. For example, it could detect recurring patterns of invalidation in workplace communication long before a formal complaint arises.
- **Emotional Modeling & Behavioral Forecasting:** Helps anticipate psychological responses, flagging escalating dynamics such as disengagement or latent conflict. These forecasts can assist therapists tracking unresolved emotional wounds, HR professionals managing team health, or platform designers identifying patterns of user alienation.
- **Ethical Alignment Frameworks:** By incorporating diverse ethical paradigms and reinforcement learning, AI can begin to assess fairness and injustice with growing nuance. Tools like the RHI help translate subjective experiences into structured, machine-readable data.
- **AI-Assisted Moral Arbitration:** AI-driven mediation tools, serving as “digital ombudsmen” could offer guided reflection and acknowledgment of harm in low-stakes interpersonal conflicts. These agents may support relational risk scoring, restorative

justice efforts, and early conflict resolution in settings where human mediators are unavailable.

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## Safeguards and Governance in AI-Driven Harm Assessment

The power of AI to detect and mediate harm raises critical concerns around misuse and bias. Responsible implementation of the RHI in AI systems must include:

- **Human-in-the-Loop Design:** AI should support, but not replace, human judgment, ensuring context-sensitive interpretation. AI-supported RHI systems can scale emotional insight without bypassing human wisdom (Chen et al., 2023).
  - **Transparency and Explainability:** Every AI-generated score or recommendation must be traceable and understandable.
  - **Input Validation & Guardrails:** Safeguards should detect and mitigate inflated, biased, or malicious inputs.
  - **Bias Auditing:** Regular evaluations across demographic, cultural, and linguistic groups are necessary to ensure fair outcomes.
  - **Ethical Usage Guidelines:** Clear boundaries must guide how and where RHI-powered AI is applied, favoring therapy, research, and restorative justice while avoiding punitive or adversarial use cases.
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Each of these capabilities can be aligned with the RHI scoring model, enabling not just detection but also structured interpretation of non-legal harm. By embedding ethical principles and safeguards into these tools, we can amplify their value while minimizing risk. The goal is not simply to analyze harm, but to do so in a way that promotes empathy, repair, and social trust. As AI continues to shape our personal and professional environments, its role in helping society recognize and respond to emotional harm could become a cornerstone of digital ethics and emotional intelligence at scale.

## Applications in Policy and Society

As the Relational Harm Index (RHI) gains conceptual maturity, its applications extend far beyond individual assessments. From public policy and healthcare to education, workplace culture, and AI governance, the ability to quantify and contextualize relational harm offers new ways to promote fairness, prevent escalation, and improve institutional responses to complex interpersonal issues.

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### Government and Criminal Justice: Preemptive Indicators of Risk

Legal systems are historically reactive, intervening only after harm escalates to criminal or civil thresholds. The RHI offers a proactive lens, identifying patterns of harm before they culminate in legal violations. Systematic reviews show that restorative justice often leads to reduced anxiety, guilt, and post-traumatic symptoms among victims (Nascimento et al., 2022). Consistent scores indicating repeated psychological or social harm could inform:

- **Probation and parole decisions:** where relational instability often precedes reoffending.
- **Domestic violence prevention:** detecting patterns of coercive control even before physical harm occurs.
- **Community policing strategies:** identifying relational stress within neighborhoods that may precede unrest or erode public trust.

**Case Example:** A parole officer integrates the RHI into monthly check-ins. One client's score trends upward over three months, revealing increasing proximity and recurrence scores related to conflicts at home. This prompts a referral to counseling before the situation escalates, a preventative step that would not have occurred under conventional monitoring.

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### Healthcare: Recognizing Trauma and Enhancing Mental Health

Medical and mental health professionals increasingly recognize that unaddressed interpersonal harm contributes to chronic stress, depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. Embedding RHI assessments into:

- **Intake evaluations:** to uncover root relational causes of emotional distress.
- **Treatment planning:** prioritizing unresolved relational wounds.
- **Population health metrics:** identifying harm-related trends across demographics and geographies.

#### Case Example:

A hospital's behavioral health department uses the RHI during intake for patients presenting with anxiety, depression, or psychosomatic symptoms. One patient, a 34-year-old woman, reports chronic fatigue, insomnia, and panic attacks. While her medical history is unremarkable, her RHI

score (39/50) reflects significant harm caused by an emotionally manipulative partner. The quantified score validates her distress, prompts relational trauma counseling, and offers a shared language for progress tracking over time. For a detailed breakdown of this scenario's RHI assessment and scoring, see the case example below, at the end of this section.

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## **Education and the Workplace: Addressing Culture, Power, and Harassment**

Schools and workplaces are ecosystems where relational harm can quietly fester. Power imbalances, subtle exclusions, and unchecked incivility often go unreported but can lead to disengagement and burnout. The RHI can help:

- **Administrators** track cultural health beyond compliance metrics.
- **HR teams** detect microaggressions, retaliation, and toxic dynamics before formal complaints arise.
  - Microaggressions cultivate psychologically unsafe environments and are linked to depression, anxiety, burnout, and reduced team cohesion (Desai, 2023).
  - Microaggressions may seem minor or harmless, but meta-analytic evidence indicates they are significantly linked with declines in psychological well-being, physical health, and job-related outcomes (Costa et al., 2022).
- **Educators** identify early signs of social ostracization, especially among vulnerable student populations.

**Case Example:** A university's student affairs department pilots RHI assessments during mediation sessions between students in conflict. In one case, recurring low-intent but high-impact incidents between roommates yield an RHI score that triggers a housing change, preventing escalation and supporting both students' academic performance.

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## **AI Governance: Integrating RHI into Ethical Decision-Making**

As AI systems make increasingly impactful decisions in areas like content moderation, hiring, sentencing recommendations, and user behavior modeling, fairness is paramount. Yet most ethical frameworks lack an operational definition of emotional or social harm. Incorporating the RHI into AI systems could:

- Flag emotionally damaging outputs, such as algorithmic bias or exclusionary language.
- Support ethical AI audits with structured harm assessments.
- Align machine learning outcomes with human values, moving beyond statistical fairness toward relational fairness.

**Case Example:** A social media platform integrates RHI-based sentiment analysis into its moderation algorithms. A user repeatedly receives subtle but targeted invalidating comments that

individually fall below moderation thresholds. Over time, cumulative harm scores trigger an intervention - offering the user support resources and adjusting recommendation algorithms to reduce exposure to harmful interactions.

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## **Toward a Relationally-Informed Society**

By embedding RHI scoring into diverse domains, institutions can move from reactive harm management to proactive relational well-being. In policy, healthcare, education, workplaces, and AI systems, the RHI transforms subjective experiences into structured data, enabling earlier intervention, fairer decision-making, and more meaningful paths toward repair.

When implemented with safeguards for privacy, bias prevention, and human oversight, the RHI's role in society can extend far beyond measurement, becoming a catalyst for cultural change rooted in empathy, accountability, and trust.

## **Case Example: The RHI in a Healthcare Setting**

### **Scenario:**

A hospital's behavioral health department begins using the Relational Harm Index (RHI) during intake assessments for patients presenting with anxiety, depression, or psychosomatic symptoms. One patient, a 34-year-old woman, reports chronic fatigue, insomnia, and panic attacks. Though her medical history is unremarkable, she describes a "stressful home life" involving a partner who consistently invalidates her emotions, dismisses her needs, and uses subtle manipulation to control her behavior.

### **RHI Questionnaire & Scoring**

Each question is scored from 0 to 5 based on patient self-report and clinician interpretation:

<b>RHI Question</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Score</b>
1. Did the person causing the harm intend to hurt or disregard your needs?	Intent	1
2. To what extent did the event or pattern interfere with your daily life?	Impact	5
3. Has the harm affected your sense of safety or mental well-being?	Impact	5
4. How long has this harm been happening?	Duration	5
5. How often does this situation repeat?	Recurrence	3
6. Is the person who caused the harm part of your daily life or household?	Proximity	5
7. Have you been able to address or resolve the situation with them?	Recurrence	2

<b>RHI Question</b>	<b>Dimension Score</b>
8. Have similar harms happened before with this person or others?	Recurrence 3
9. Do you feel trapped, unable to leave or change the situation?	Proximity 5
10. Has this experience changed how you view yourself or others?	Impact 5

**Dimension Totals (Grouped by 5 Dimensions):**

- **Intent:** 1
- **Impact:** 15 (5 + 5 + 5)
- **Duration:** 5
- **Proximity:** 10 (5 + 5)
- **Recurrence:** 8 (3 + 2 + 3)

**Raw RHI Score:** 39/50

**Interpretation:** *High Relational Harm*

**Outcome:**

With a quantified RHI score, the clinician validates the patient’s emotional distress and shifts the care plan to include relational trauma counseling, support group options, and safety planning resources. The patient, who previously minimized her experiences, responds positively to seeing her story reflected in a structured, evidence-informed format. The tool also helps the therapist track changes over time, giving both patient and clinician a shared language for emotional progress.

*For a separate example visualization of the RHI scoring, please see diagram 1 in the appendix.*

## **Risks, Criticisms, and Limitations**

While the RHI holds promise as a powerful framework across policy, healthcare, education, and digital systems, especially when paired with AI, its effectiveness depends not only on thoughtful design but also on mindful implementation. Any tool that touches human relationships and subjective experiences carries inherent risks. Misuse, misinterpretation, or overreliance could undermine the very trust and fairness these systems aim to foster. This section explores the limitations, criticisms, and open questions that must be addressed to responsibly advance RHI-based tools and systems.

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### **Cultural Relativism**

Not all harm is universally recognized. What constitutes a serious relational offense in one culture may be trivial or even normative in another. For instance, direct criticism may be seen as constructive in some Western contexts but deeply disrespectful in others. Philosophical accounts of relativism explain why standards of right/wrong and justification can be framework-dependent rather than universal (Baghramian & Carter, 2025).

This variability poses challenges for AI systems that must be trained on context-rich data. A single global RHI model risks flattening nuance or reinforcing dominant cultural norms at the expense of marginalized groups. As Aspernäs (2023) notes, navigating between subjectivism and relativism has become increasingly complex in a post-truth world, highlighting the difficulty of building frameworks that respect diversity while maintaining coherence. Local adaptation, or at minimum, culturally segmented models, may be necessary to ensure respectful and meaningful interpretation.

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### **Weaponization of Perceived Harm**

The concept of subjective harm can be manipulated. Individuals may learn to exaggerate, fabricate, or strategically frame harm to gain advantage in social, legal, or workplace dynamics. While human evaluators are also vulnerable to this manipulation, automating recognition systems adds scale and speed, and potentially removes opportunities for human discernment.

In high-stakes environments (e.g., custody disputes, academic misconduct claims), misuse of RHI systems could lead to unjust outcomes. Guardrails, such as requiring corroborating input or human review, are essential to avoid this pitfall.

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### **False Positives, Bias, and Overreach in AI Detection**

AI systems, even when well-trained, can misread emotional tone, infer false context, or reflect underlying biases present in their training data. A sarcastic comment might be flagged as aggression; a culturally specific idiom might be misclassified as exclusionary.

Moreover, bias can enter through demographic imbalance in datasets or through reinforcement of existing institutional inequities. Without ongoing bias audits and transparent reporting, such errors can undermine confidence in the tool and produce systemic injustice.

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## Privacy, PHI, and Data Ethics

Because the RHI often engages with deeply personal, emotional content, the outputs it generates may intersect with Protected Health Information (PHI) or Personally Identifiable Information (PII), even when not explicitly tied to clinical records.

Key considerations include:

- **Unintentional PHI generation:** AI-generated insights might indirectly reveal sensitive emotional or psychological data, especially in therapeutic or healthcare-adjacent settings.
- **Consent and transparency:** Users must understand how their inputs are used, what is inferred, and who can access the data or scores.
- **Data protection and usage boundaries:** RHI-related data should not be shared with third parties (e.g., insurers, employers) without explicit and informed consent. Its use in decisions affecting livelihoods, care access, or legal rights must be tightly controlled.

These concerns demand rigorous data governance, clear user rights, and adherence to ethical and legal standards such as HIPAA, GDPR, CCPA, or equivalents.

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## Governance, Oversight, and Human Judgment

Even the best AI models lack moral intuition. They may process data consistently, but they cannot understand lived experience the way humans do. For that reason, human-in-the-loop systems remain essential, not only for oversight but also for empathetic interpretation.

Any deployment of the RHI in sensitive contexts must be accompanied by:

- Independent governance structures to monitor fairness and address grievances.
- Defined escalation pathways for challenging or appealing AI-generated scores.
- Policy limitations that prevent the RHI from being used punitively or outside of restorative frameworks.

## **Additional Limitations and Practical Constraints**

**Reductionism:** By converting nuanced human experiences into numerical scores or categorical ratings, the RHI risks oversimplifying complex relational dynamics. While quantification can aid consistency and communication, it may also strip away important emotional, historical, or situational context.

**Inter-Rater Reliability:** Whether applied by human evaluators or AI, consistent scoring across assessors and contexts is a challenge. Variability in interpretation can undermine trust in the framework, particularly in high-stakes environments.

**Resistance to Adoption:** Even well-designed tools may face skepticism or outright rejection from institutions, mediators, or stakeholders who fear misuse, question accuracy, or prefer established processes. Building credibility will require pilot testing, transparent reporting, and stakeholder engagement.

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**In sum**, these risks do not diminish the value of the RHI, but they underscore the importance of cautious, transparent, and well-governed deployment. Addressing them directly can help ensure that the index is used as intended: to foster fairness, empathy, and trust, rather than to inadvertently cause harm or entrench inequity.

## Future Outlook

As the Relational Harm Index (RHI) gains conceptual traction, its role expands beyond diagnostics into a catalyst for cultural, technological, and policy transformation. In an era where interpersonal conflict and AI are both accelerating, the RHI stands at a critical intersection offering a structured, scalable way to integrate emotional reality into decision-making. Like GDP measures economic health, or public health data tracks population wellness, RHI could become a societal metric for relational well-being.

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### Advancements in AI–Human Synergy

The future of RHI lies not in AI alone or human judgment in isolation, but in **human-in-the-loop** frameworks where empathy and AI-driven objectivity amplify one another. Just as calculators enhanced mathematical precision without replacing mathematical thinking, AI-enabled RHI systems can scale emotional insight without eroding human wisdom.

For this collaboration to be meaningful, ethical governance must evolve alongside technology, embedding principles that:

- Adapt to cultural variation in emotional norms.
  - Preserve individual agency and informed consent.
  - Maintain continuous, real-world feedback loops for course correction.
  - Uphold interpretability so outputs remain understandable to non-specialists.
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### Societal Shifts Through Collective Emotional Intelligence

Over the long term, RHI could help shift social norms toward **greater emotional literacy**, not by policing behavior, but by making relational harm legible before it escalates. This is not surveillance or a social credit system. It is a framework for prevention and repair.

If used responsibly, RHI-informed systems could foster:

- Healthier conflict resolution across communities and cultures.
- Greater resilience in the face of misunderstanding, loss, or division.
- Policy and justice systems that prioritize restoration over punishment.

By elevating relational harm to the level of a *public health indicator*, society can treat it as a shared responsibility rather than a private struggle.

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### Research, Pilots, and Cross-Sector Collaboration

To mature and prove its value, the RHI must transition from concept to **field deployment**. Pilot programs and peer-reviewed studies will be essential for testing adaptability, inclusivity, and long-term effectiveness, while tracking unintended consequences.

Promising domains for application include:

- **Education:** Anti-bullying campaigns, peer mediation, and emotional literacy curricula.
- **Workplace Culture:** Assessing team cohesion, leadership health, and early signs of burnout.
- **Mental Health Platforms:** Integrating into therapy apps to track progress and uncover unseen relational wounds.
- **Criminal Justice Reform:** Measuring restorative justice outcomes via relational harm reduction.

Cross-sector partnerships, universities, NGOs, tech firms, and community organizations can ensure these applications are credible, diverse, and scalable. Trauma-informed approaches emphasize the healing power of relationships, contextualizing relational harm not just as a symptom to treat, but as a pathway to restoration (Sweeney et al., 2018). This framing aligns with the RHI's goal of validating emotional injury through structured relational understanding.

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## Standards, Policy, and Governance

Responsible adoption at scale requires **policy and standards to precede ubiquity**. This means policymakers, ethicists, technologists, and community leaders must co-create guardrails that:

- Define clear usage boundaries (e.g., therapy vs. law enforcement).
- Align with established governance models (HIPAA, GDPR) to protect PHI and PII.
- Offer interpretability guidelines for both end users and reviewers.
- Prevent coercive use in high-stakes contexts like hiring or court testimony.

A **public-interest consortium** or independent advisory body could oversee global interoperability, research ethics, and cultural adaptability. Existing ethical frameworks, such as the U.S. Intelligence Community's Principles of Artificial Intelligence Ethics (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2020), show how abstract values can be translated into actionable standards. The RHI could benefit from a similar approach to ensure accountability and trustworthiness across contexts.

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## Closing Perspective

The RHI is not a tool for verdicts, it is a *language for recognition*. It gives voice to relational wounds that legal and institutional systems cannot easily address, doing so with consistency, empathy, and structure.

We invite technologists, educators, clinicians, policymakers, and citizens to co-shape this future. A society that measures and repairs relational harm is one that invests in its own humanity. With the RHI, the goal is not just to build a smarter world, but a wiser one.

## Conclusion

Relational harm remains one of the most under-recognized yet consequential forms of suffering in modern society. Its effects ripple through families, workplaces, healthcare systems, and digital communities, often without acknowledgment or remedy. The Relational Harm Index (RHI) offers a structured, measurable way to confront this blind spot, one that respects the weight of lived experience while providing a framework for analysis, mediation, and ethical decision-making. With the support of AI, these tools can help translate intangible emotional wounds into shared understanding and practical action.

Yet no single discipline can carry this work forward. The responsible development of RHI-based systems will demand collaboration across psychology, law, healthcare, education, AI development, and public policy. This white paper is not a final answer but an opening: a call for dialogue, experimentation, and co-creation. If we aspire to a society that is not only smarter but wiser, we must begin by acknowledging and repairing the harm we have too long dismissed as invisible.

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# Appendix

Diagram 1

