

Conversation cards

Quality in the shelter



Branchevereniging voor participatie,
begeleiding en veilige opvang



This fan was made possible by the Valente quality workgroup as part of the First a Home program

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1

Why are we doing this?

The foundation of good social shelters and their quality standards must begin with it's clients. It's crucial that they feel heard and seen so that they can start with their recovery. After all, they are the core of our shelters.

If we truly want to make an impact, it's crucial to consider the minimum standard of quality from the client's perspective.

The accompanying conversation cards have been developed to initiate discussions about quality with clients, colleagues, and the organization. They are based on themes considered essential from the client's perspective, such as safety, structure, homeliness, experience-based expertise, perspective, daily activities, diversity, accessibility, personal attention, basic staff attitudes, living arrangements, and self-management.

These themes stem from the phases of clients' recovery journeys. They begin with accessibility and reception at the shelter, then move on to the shelter stay, and finally to the prospects after the shelter period.



2

Our vision on quality of care

In our initial care, the individual is our central focus. We approach clients with genuine attention, without judgment, and see them as whole individuals with potential, not based on limitations or problems. We offer a safe, home-like environment where clients feel welcome and can regain perspective.

Our support is close, personal, and focused on recovery, with personal control and a forward-thinking mindset as guiding principles. We believe in the power of listening, in acknowledging someone's story, and in exploring together what is possible. We let go of stigma; we stand by the client.

3

How do you use the conversation cards?

The themes on the cards emerged from focus groups and experiences of clients, combined with results from previous research and existing quality standards.

The cards are designed to facilitate easy discussions about important topics. Examples include resident meetings, team meetings, consultations with service partners, and one-on-one meetings. The blue cards are designed to initiate discussions with colleagues/policymakers. The purple cards can be used to engage in discussions with clients.



You can find the theme here

You can also discuss an example

You can choose a question from the list

Maybe the other person has a good question?

Accessibility/Findability

Examples

- Employee Visibility
- Information and Services
- Digital Findability

Questions

- 1 Where do you look for information when you need support in a homeless situation?
- 2 How do you prefer to communicate with the employees? (Drop-in/by appointment/app)
- 3 Do you use the organization's website/social media?

Can you think of a question about this theme?



Accessibility/ Findability



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Can you think of a question about this theme?



Accessibility/ Findability



Examples

- Client Visibility
- Information and Services
- Digital Findability
- Collaboration

Questions

- 1 How does the organization ensure that homeless people can find you?
- 2 How does the organization ensure that clients receive accessible and appropriate information?
- 3 How often do clients use your organization's website/social media, and what is the purpose of your website/social media?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Safety/ expertise about security



Examples

- Feeling safe
- Access to lockers
- Dealing with aggression

Questions

- 1 What do you need to feel safe at the shelter?
- 2 Do you always have access to a locker?
- 3 Do you know what to do if an unsafe situation arises at the shelter, for example, if a fire breaks out or you feel unsafe?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Safety/ expertise about security



Examples

- Safe working environment
- Clear safety protocol
- Training options
- Dealing with aggression

Questions

1

How does your organization ensure safe working practices in shelters?

2

Does your organization offer training for employees that focuses on de-escalating procedures?

3

Does your organization have a safety protocol?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Arrival/ calming down



Examples

- Initial Reception
- Information and Explanation
- Initial Contact with the Supervisor

Questions

- 1 How was your first day the shelter?
- 2 Did you receive sufficient practical information upon arrival, such as meal times, house rules, etc.?
- 3 Did your first period at the shelter help you relax?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Arrival/ calming down



Examples

- Initial Reception
- Information and Explanation
- Initial contact with the employees

Questions

- 1 Is there a warm, personal welcome (no bureaucratic or distant start)?
- 2 Is the client's tension, stress, or confusion taken into account?
- 3 Is information available in understandable language (possibly multiple languages)?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Practical support



Examples

- Assistance with applying for basic services such as DigiD, ID, and GP appointments
- Administrative and financial support
- Support with making appointments

Questions

- 1 What practical help do you need in your daily life?
- 2 Are you getting enough support on topics that are important to you right now?
- 3 Are there things you'd like to do (again) yourself?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Practical support



Examples

- Tailoring support to daily needs
- Promoting self-reliance
- Collaborating with informal support
- Identifying too much or too little pressure

Questions

- 1 Does the client have sufficient support with daily tasks?
- 2 Are there tasks the client wants or is able to continue to do independently?
- 3 Are there any signs of too much or too little pressure?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Structure and daily routine



Examples

- Clear daily structure
- Varied range of activities
- Sports and recreation areas
- Client participation opportunities

Questions

- 1 Are there times when you feel bored or lonely?
- 2 Do you have any input on the activities offered at the daycare center?
- 3 What do you think of the daily structure offered at the daycare center? Think about meal and bedtimes, activities, etc.



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Structure and daily routine



Examples

- Clear daily structure
- Varied range of activities
- Sports and recreation areas

Questions

- 1 How do you ensure a clear daily structure in 24-hour care?
- 2 Does your organization offer sufficient opportunities (internally and externally) for clients to engage in activities?
- 3 Are sports and exercise opportunities included in the financing agreements?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Having control



Examples

- Making your own choices in daily life and care
- Opportunity to express preferences
- Understanding and respect for your own pace and style
- Support in making choices

Questions

- 1 To what extent can you determine what happens each day?
- 2 What would you like to have more say in?
- 3 What helps you make your own decisions, even when you need help?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Having control



Examples

- Supporting and encouraging independent choices
- Respecting personal preferences
- Adapting to one's own pace and style
- Avoiding unnecessary handovers of tasks

Questions

- 1 Do I support self-direction, or do I unconsciously take over?
- 2 How well do I know what this person values in daily life?
- 3 How can I contribute to strengthening their self-confidence and autonomy?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Daytime activities/participation



Examples

- (Volunteer) work
- Creative or sporting activities
- Training
- Group activities

Questions

- 1 Are you offered volunteer opportunities?
- 2 Do they work with you to find courses or training that are right for you?
- 3 Do they work with you to determine what kind of work you'd like to do now or in the future?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Daytime activities/participation



Examples

- Assessing client needs
- Motivation
- Finding a match

Questions

- 1 What kind of participation is available internally and externally for the client?
- 2 Does the organization offer sufficient participation for the client?
- 3 How are clients motivated?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Perspective



Examples

- Accessible walk-in consultations
- Network support
- Active information about treatment progression options
- Active network with network partners and clients

Questions

- 1 Do you ever talk to a counselor about the next step in your life?
- 2 Do they discuss with you what options exist for you to move on after leaving shelter?
- 3 Do you receive support from your counselor in connecting with your family, friends, or acquaintances?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Perspective



Examples

- Accessible walk-in consultations
- Network support
- Active information about treatment progression options
- Active network with network partners and clients

Questions

- 1 How does your organization manage collaboration with and support for the network surrounding clients?
- 2 Are employees aware of the social map?
- 3 How do you ensure annual updates of all networks and meetings in which your organization is involved?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Furnishing and homeliness



Examples

- Separate departments
- Clean sanitary facilities
- Safe drug user areas
- Positive living environment
- Privacy

Questions

- 1 How do you experience the use of alcohol or other substances in the shelter? Do you feel safe in this situation? Does it bother you, or not?
- 2 Do you feel at home here in the shelter?
- 3 Do you feel there are sufficient opportunities to be alone (for a while) when you need to be?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Furnishing and homeliness



Examples

- Separate departments
- Clean sanitary facilities
- Safe drug user areas
- Positive living environment
- Privacy

Questions

- 1 Are the basic facilities in order? Is it clean and homely?
- 2 How do you ensure separate sections in the shelter when multiple target groups are being cared for?
- 3 Is there sufficient attention to clients' privacy?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Experience-based expertise



Examples

- Accessible walk-in consultations
- Use of experience-based expertise
- Training programs for experience-based expertise

Questions

- 1 How can an expert by experience support you in shelters?
- 2 Have you ever considered volunteering as an expert by experience?
- 3 Do your support workers ever ask you questions about what it's like to be homeless?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Experience-based expertise



Examples

- Accessible walk-in consultations
- Use of experience-based expertise
- Training programs for experience-based expertise

Questions

- 1 How does your organization ensure that clients are sufficiently informed about the progress of the programs they are undergoing?
- 2 Does your organization make sufficient use of experiential expertise?
- 3 Does your organization have a defined vision for experiential expertise?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Customized care/ diversity



Examples

- Cultural and ethnic background
- Gender and sexual diversity
- Social diversity
- Physical diversity

Questions

- 1 How are different norms and values addressed in the shelter?
- 2 Do you feel safe in the shelter to be who you are/want to be?
- 3 Is your background sufficiently taken into account?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Customized care/ diversity



Examples

- Cultural and ethnic background
- Gender and sexual diversity
- Social diversity
- Physical diversity

Questions

- 1 What role does a client's diversity play in our support?
- 2 How do we address psychiatric disorders, intellectual disabilities, and addiction problems?
- 3 Do we consider a client's background when making choices?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Personal attention/ professional or buddy



Examples

- Trust in counselors or contacts
- Attention to personal stories and needs
- Availability of a dedicated professional or buddy
- Recognition of emotions and individuality
- Time pressure vs. genuine attention

Questions

- 1 Do you feel seen and heard as a person?
- 2 Do you feel there's room for your story?
- 3 What helps you feel truly understood?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Personal attention/ professional or buddy



Examples

- Building trust
- Presence of a dedicated contact person
- Continuity of contact
- Recognition of emotional needs and personal history

Questions

- 1 Is there time and space for genuine connection?
- 2 Is the person behind the care request seen?
- 3 Is attention paid to their life story, emotions, and individuality?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Employee attitude/ human image



Examples

- A respectful and empathetic approach
- Listening, patience, and clarity
- Attention to human dignity
- Consistent and reliable caregivers

Questions

- 1 How do you experience your interaction with staff?
- 2 Do you feel you're treated with respect?
- 3 What do you value in how people interact with you?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Employee attitude/ human image



Examples

- A respectful and open approach
- Empathy and patience in communication
- Clear and honest communication
- Self-reflection and peer feedback
- Culture and people-oriented work

Questions

- 1 Am I treating this client the way they want to be treated?
- 2 What does my basic attitude convey to the client?
- 3 How do we keep each other focused on people-centered work?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Housing agreements vs. controlling practices



Examples

- Clarity and communication about rules
- Room for customization or deviation from the rules
- Balance between safety and freedom
- Perception of rules: helpful or restrictive?
- Opportunity for input or consultation

Questions

- 1 How do you experience the rules in the shelter?
- 2 Can you contribute to the agreements that apply?
- 3 Do you feel free within the boundaries that exist?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Housing agreements vs. controlling practices



Examples

- Clarity and communication about rules
- Applying personalized services within agreements
- Involving clients in rules
- Balance between safety and freedom

Questions

- 1 Are clients involved in making or adjusting rules?
- 2 Do these rules serve safety or primarily the structure of the organization?
- 3 How do we create room for customization within the house policy?



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Additional topic...



Examples

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

Questions

1 ...

2 ...

3 ...



Can you think of a question about this theme?



Additional topic...



Examples

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

Questions

1 ...

2 ...

3 ...



Can you think of a question about this theme?