



VP02

[www.merlijngroep.nl](http://www.merlijngroep.nl)

*Merlijn*

## **Two-Day Basic Training for Confidential Counselors**



## Two-Day Basic Training for Confidential Counselors

People may encounter a wide range of stressful situations at work, which can even lead to illness. This is not only detrimental to the individual but also to their work and the organization. Confidential counselors play a vital role in helping people return to their full potential. Their role is invaluable to the organization as well.

Being a confidential counselor is a profession—a challenging and complex one. It's not something you can just do; it must be learned. It requires not only soft skills such as empathy and active listening, but also specific knowledge and techniques. The specialists at Merlijn ensure our training programs are innovative and continuously updated with the latest insights and methods.

Merlijn has been providing training for almost 30 years. As specialists in conflict management, resolution, and prevention, we are deeply engaged in the work of the confidential counselor. It was a logical step that we provide this training by ourselves. We offer an accredited basic training program for those who wish to become certified confidential counselors, a two-day training for internal counselors where certification is not required, and various advanced training options. All training is available in-person and online, allowing us to quickly adapt to changing circumstances. Our programs are available in Dutch and English, and we are steadily expanding our offering, not only in the area of undesirable behavior but also in the field of integrity.

We are also active in deploying external confidential counselors, complaints committees, investigating complaints, and advising organizations on these important issues. See our General Brochure for more details.

The world of confidential counselors is evolving rapidly—and so are we. We stay ahead of developments and ensure the profession receives the professional depth it deserves.

Naturally, questions may remain. We welcome them. Please feel free to contact us or join one of our information sessions or an introductory meeting.

Mr. Drs. Dick H.J. Bonenkamp, Founder and Director of Merlijn Advies Groep



## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
Open registration or in-company .....	4
<b>Information about two-day Basic Training for Confidential Counselors</b>	<b>5</b>
General .....	5
Target Group .....	5
Accreditation by LVV / Certification .....	5
Previous education.....	5
Study Load .....	5
Group Size.....	5
Practical Training .....	5
Preparation & Approach .....	6
Number of Participants .....	6
Certificate.....	6
Trainers, Dates, Price, and Location .....	6
Confidentiality of the Training .....	7
Follow-up to the Training .....	7
Certificate of Attendance / Evaluation / Retake.....	7
Catch-up Sessions .....	7
References.....	7
PE-Points.....	7
<b>Program</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>What else does Merlijn offer in the field of Confidential Counsellors?</b>	<b>9</b>
Advice and Support for Organizations.....	9
<b>Merlijn Groep</b>	<b>10</b>

## Introduction

Many people experience bullying, (sexual) harassment, discrimination, or aggression in the workplace. Undesirable behavior can have a major impact on the work atmosphere and the health of employees. Issues related to inappropriate conduct and integrity often overlap. They can lead to tension and conflict between colleagues and/or managers. Usually, people are skilled enough to resolve these issues together. However, there are situations where this is not possible.

Sometimes, organizations themselves are not adequately equipped to deal with these situations; it may not be clear how to address such issues, or where to turn for advice or to file a report. There may also be a culture in which people do not feel safe enough to come forward and speak up. This can lead to the continuation of undesirable situations, with potential consequences such as unhappy and stressed employees, increased (long-term) absenteeism and staff turnover, loss of revenue, productivity and innovation capacity, a heightened risk profile for the organization, and significant reputational damage.

### **Confidential counselors are crucial to both employee and employer.**

In addition, newspapers report almost daily on individuals and organizations involved in transgressive or unethical behavior, along with the consequences. These often result in hefty fines, ranging from several hundred thousand to several million euros — per organization, that is. Beyond financial penalties, organizations also face both material and immaterial damages: investigation costs, disruption of business operations, legal fees, loss of reputation, decline in quality, and reduced employee engagement. This is a costly and time-consuming affair.

A confidential advisor can help prevent conflict escalation and promote greater transparency within the organization. Moreover, a confidential advisor can contribute constructively to fostering a culture in which people feel safe to speak up and to address one another. By appointing a confidential advisor, both managers and employees can receive support and guidance, and it becomes easier to uncover what may be simmering beneath the surface, allowing the organization to take timely and appropriate action.

Under Dutch occupational health and safety (ARBO) legislation, employers are required to implement policies that support employee well-being for example, by appointing a confidential advisor. It is widely expected that an amendment to the Working Conditions Act (Arbeidsomstandighedenwet) will soon be approved by Parliament, making it mandatory for all organizations to have a properly trained confidential advisor in place.

Under the Dutch Civil Code, employers are not allowed to disadvantage employees for reporting a suspected wrongdoing in good faith and in an appropriate manner.

Organizations with more than 50 employees are, under the Whistleblowers Authority Act (Wet Huis voor klokkenluiders), required to establish procedures for reporting societal misconduct. Here too, the confidential advisor can play an important role.

**Training for Internal Confidential Counselors or as an Introduction**

The Dutch Labour Inspectorate requires organizations to have a properly trained confidential counselor. While certification is not always necessary, especially for smaller organizations or where an external counselor is already appointed, a shorter course often suffices.

Certification does have advantages but also comes with costs: longer and more expensive training, certification fees, and mandatory refresher courses and peer review sessions. This may not be required for every counselor.

That's why Merlijn offers a two-day basic training, covering the essential knowledge and skills a confidential counselor needs. It's less in-depth than the four-day certified training but sufficient for effective performance in the role.

We aim to tailor our offerings to the participants' needs. There are options to extend this basic training with additional skill practice or a focus on integrity. These combination courses offer excellent value.

**Open registration or in-company**

All our courses can be provided in-company. Custom training tailored to your organization's specific needs is also available. We provide a quote based on content, logistics, and location.

## Information about two-day Basic Training for Confidential Counselors

### General

During the 2-day basic training, you will learn the foundations of working as a confidential advisor. The training covers the tasks and role of the confidential advisor, their position within the organization, and the legal context in which they operate. In addition, attention is given to the essential skills required for the role, with opportunities to practice these skills.

The focus will be on the general framework of the work of a confidential advisor and on undesirable behavior in the workplace (including harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, aggression, and discrimination). Integrity-related issues will also be briefly addressed.

Alongside the theoretical framework, practical skills training is an integral part of this basic training.

### Target Group

The training is aimed at individuals who are currently working or planning to work as internal or external confidential advisors. Participants wish to prepare themselves for this role by expanding their knowledge of the specific responsibilities of a confidential advisor, strengthening their communication skills, and/or gaining awareness of their position within an organization.

The training also addresses the various tensions and dilemmas that confidential advisors may face in relation to their role and position within the organization.

A minimum educational level of MBO+ (intermediate vocational education plus) is required.

### Accreditation by LVV / Certification

Due to its short duration, this course does not meet LVV certification requirements to become a certified confidential counselor.

### Previous education

The preferred level for this training is higher professional education (HBO) or higher. A minimum of MBO+ (intermediate vocational education) is required. The candidate's profile is equally important. Therefore, we prefer to review the CV beforehand and, if there are any doubts, we will first schedule an interview.

### Study Load

Approximately 3 hours of preparation, mainly reading the syllabus.

### Group Size

Minimum 4, maximum 10 participants, with one trainer. Guest trainers may assist.

### Practical Training

We don't use training actors. Playing the role of a reporter provides a great deal of insight into what it all entails and is therefore incredibly valuable.

During the training, everyone will experience what it's like to be a confidential counselor through role-playing. Several participants from previous training courses have indicated they would like to practice more. We offer you this opportunity by offering the one-day Advanced Skills Training at a reduced rate.

## Preparation & Approach

Three weeks before the training, participants receive the syllabus and logistic information about the training. It is assumed that the syllabus has been read prior to the start of the training.

The training will be a mix of providing information/theory, practical exercises, and reflection. Participants will practice with each other using casestudies provided. In addition, attention will be given to practice situations relevant to each individual participant and their specific learning goals.

## Number of Participants

Given the intensive nature of the training and the importance of giving each participant the opportunity to address their questions, we choose to work with relatively small groups. The maximum number of participants is 10, and the minimum is 4.

## Certificate

Participants who attend the full training and actively participate will receive a certificate of attendance.

## Trainers, Dates, Price, and Location

For more information about the trainers, training dates, location, and price, please refer to [our website](#).

We receive a lot of positive feedback about [our unique training locations](#) and they are also more cost-effective than most regular training centers.

[Meet Berlage  
In Amsterdam](#)



[Landhuis Oliphant close  
to Rotterdam](#)



[De Ruwenberg close to  
's-Hertogenbosch](#)



[Kasteel de Vanenburg  
close to Putten](#)



[Kasteel Limbricht  
close to Sittard](#)



[Landgoed Huize Bergen  
close to 's-Hertogenbosch](#)



What is included in the accommodation costs: Training venue (main training room and, if applicable, breakout rooms), use of learning materials, coffee, tea, cookies, sweets, fruit, soft drinks, lunch, snacks, and drinks at the end of the day.

If you would like to stay overnight and/or have dinner, please contact the relevant venue directly. Merlijn has arranged a discount for participants of our training programs.

### Confidentiality of the Training

Our training programs make extensive use of real-life case studies, not only from the trainers but especially from the participants. It goes without saying that observing confidentiality and privacy regulations is an absolute requirement to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all.

### Follow-up to the Training

After the training, various forms of further support are available, including peer consultation (interview) and supervision.

### Certificate of Attendance / Evaluation / Retake

Upon successful completion of the course, participants will receive a certificate of attendance.

### Catch-up Sessions

Finally, as a professional training provider, Merlijn is always attentive to the individual circumstances of participants. Any parts of the course that were missed due to illness or other unforeseen events must be made up in order to receive certification, in accordance with the requirements of the LVV. We of course offer the opportunity to do so free of charge.

### References

Recent references can be provided upon request to prospective participants.

### PE-Points

This training is accredited with 12 MfN PE-points by the MfN.

Merlijn, as a certified educational and training institute, is accredited by several professional organizations, including the Landelijke Vereniging van Vertrouwenspersonen (LVV), Mediatorsfederatie Nederland (MfN), the Nederlandse Orde van Advocaten (NOVA), the Nederlandse Orde van Beroepscoaches (NOBCO), SCOOR RMZO het keurmerk voor OR opleiders, Tolken en Vertalers, Koninklijke Notariële Beroepsorganisatie (KNB), Certification Committee SAD (for labor experts) and the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Heelkunde (NVVH).



54  
PUNTEN  
PO  
ADVOCATEN

NEDERLANDSE ORDE VAN ADVOCATEN



Branchevereniging medezeggenschap

Hobbeon

SCOOR RMZO



Mediatorsfederatie  
Nederland  
KWALITEITSREGISTER

BASISOPLEIDING  
MFN GEACCREDITEERD



## Program

This is a provisional program. Adjustments may be made if circumstances require.

### Day 1

#### Morning Program

- 09.30 - 10.00 : Welcome with coffee and tea
- 10.00 - 10.30 : Welcome, overview of the full program, practical information, participant introductions & inventory of learning objectives
- 10.30 - 11.15 : What is undesirable behavior? What constitutes inappropriate conduct? What is integrity? What is the impact on victims and the organization?
- 11.15 - 11.30 : Break
- 11.30 - 12.30 : The role of the confidential counsellor, differences between undesirable conduct and integrity issues, core attitude
- 12.30 - 13.00 : The confidential counsellor within the organization (relationship with other bodies, policy)
- 13.00 - 14.00 : Lunch

#### Afternoon Program

- 14.00 - 15.00 : Communication
- 15.00 - 15.15 : Break
- 15.15 - 16.30 : Practice exercises
- 16.45 - 17.00 : Debrief and time for reflection

### Day 2

#### Morning Program

- 09.30 - 10.00 : Welcome with coffee and tea
- 10.00 - 10.15 : Introduction to the day and recap of Day 1
- 10.15 - 11.00 : What are possible solutions? Overview of available support services
- 11.05 - 11.15 : Break
- 11.15 - 11.30 : Legal framework
- 11.30 - 12.30 : Practice exercises
- 12.30 - 13.15 : Lunch

#### Afternoon Program

- 13.15 - 14.00 : Advising management, including the annual report
- 14.00 - 14.30 : Integrity
- 14.30 - 14.45 : Break
- 14.45 - 16.45 : Practice exercises
- 16.45 - 17.30 : Debrief, reflection, and Merlijn drinks

## **What else does Merlijn offer in the field of Confidential Counsellors?**

Merlijn and its affiliated professionals can take much of the work related to confidential counsellors off an organization's hands. Our services include, among others:

### **Advice and Support for Organizations**

- Provision of well-trained, certified, and experienced external Confidential Counsellors for Inappropriate Conduct and Integrity
- Provision of well-trained and experienced members or chairpersons for Complaints Committees on Inappropriate Conduct
- Support in developing and implementing policies aimed at preventing Inappropriate Conduct and promoting a culture of Integrity
- Drafting and implementing complaints procedures regarding Inappropriate Conduct
- Drafting and implementing whistleblower policies for integrity-related issues
- Coaching managers on how to handle cases of Inappropriate Conduct and integrity issues
- Acting as a sparring partner for managers facing integrity-related dilemmas
- Investigating complaints or reports

## Merlijn Groep

Merlijn Groep is a dynamic, multidisciplinary organization focused on professional communication and conflict management, both in business and personal contexts. Together with its network of affiliated partners, Merlijn serves the interests of its clients in respectful and innovative relationships driven by high ambition and a passion for sustainable, measurable results.

### We believe in the unique strengths and creativity of our clients

That's why, for decades, we've drawn inspiration from Merlin, the legendary advisor to King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Merlin lived his life backwards 'back in time' allowing him to possess knowledge and wisdom from the future. He didn't use this power to hand out ready-made solutions but instead offered thoughts and suggestions to help others access their own wisdom. In that special way, Merlin was a true Master of Communication. We help our clients discover, develop, and apply the unique aspects of their own strengths for the benefit of both them and their organizations. It is our mission to make all our expertise and knowledge available to them, and to offer both strategic and practical support in their development and current needs.

### Professionals for Professionals

Merlijn Groep offers a wide range of services, including practical training and expert support and advice in the areas of confidential counselling, employee participation, conflict coaching, legal skills, and negotiation.

Merlijn Group is committed to delivering demonstrable, distinctive quality in the content of our services, in our knowledge and professional skills, and in their sustainable application. We continuously strive for excellence.

All our services are purpose-driven. This includes our training programs, where we always offer opportunities to practice and apply newly acquired insights and skills in real-world contexts. We've found that results are best achieved through honest dialogue, where clarity and a touch of humor help maintain focus and translate learning into daily practice.

### Trust

We ensure that Merlijn is an organization people can place full trust in both in terms of our services and our relationships. That's why we continuously focus on customer needs analysis, evaluations, and research. These form the foundation for the innovation of our offerings and the development of our own expertise.

## Merlijn Groep: the customer in the picture

