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*Merlijn*

**Four-day Basic training for  
confidential counsellors**

Accredited by the national  
association of confidential  
counsellors

## Four-day basic training for confidential counsellors

Accredited by the LVV

People can have to deal with a wide variety of stress-causing circumstances in their work. They can even get sick as a result. That is of course very detrimental to those people themselves, to their work and to the organization in which they work. Confidential counsellors play an important role in giving people the opportunity to return to their own workforce. That is also invaluable for the organization.

Being a confidential advisor is a profession, a challenging and difficult profession. You don't just do that; You really have to learn that. This is not only about soft skills, such as empathy and willingness to listen, but also about knowledge and techniques that the confidential adviser must learn to master. Merlijn's specialists ensure that training courses are constantly updated and supplemented with the latest insights and associated techniques.

Merlijn has been providing training for almost 30 years. As specialists in conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict prevention, we are of course particularly interested in the work of the confidential advisor. That is why the step to providing training for confidential counsellors a few years ago was a logical step. We now have a basic training, both in Dutch and in English and a number of in-depth training courses. We do this both with 'live' training courses and online. This allows us to quickly switch between online and 'live' according to the circumstances that require us to do so. And we are steadily expanding our range of (in-depth) training courses. Not only in the field of undesirable behaviour but just as much in the field of integrity.

We are also active in deploying external confidential counsellors, complaints committees, undesirable behaviour and advising organisations in this important area. For more information about this, see the General Brochure.

The world of the confidential adviser is currently developing rapidly, and so are our activities, of course. We look ahead and are always up to date to give the profession of confidential adviser the professional content it deserves. Of course, questions will remain. We appreciate it; Feel free to contact us and if you wish, we would like to see you at one of our information meetings or in a personal informative introductory meeting.

Dick H.J. Bonenkamp, founder and director of Merlijn Advies Groep



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## Introduction

Many people experience bullying, (sexual) intimidation, discrimination or aggression at work. Undesirable behaviour has a major impact on the working atmosphere and the health of employees. Issues in the field of undesirable behaviour and integrity are often intertwined. They can cause tension and conflicts between employees and/or managers. Usually people are skilled enough to solve them together. But there are also situations in which this does not work. Sometimes organizations themselves are not sufficiently equipped to deal with these situations; It may not be sufficiently clear how you can discuss such a situation, or where you can go for advice or for a report. Or there is a culture where people just don't feel safe enough to come forward and speak out. This can mean maintaining undesirable situations with the possible consequences: unhappy and stressed people, an increase in sick leave and staff turnover, loss of turnover, productivity and innovative capacity, an increased risk profile of the organisation, and considerable damage to its image.

### **The confidential advisor, important for employee and employer**

The current working climate in many organizations in the Netherlands is not always experienced as pleasant. Around 10-15% of employees experience undesirable behaviour by managers or colleagues, (40%) have to deal with high job demands. This translates into about 6 million days of absence due to work pressure, stress or work that is too difficult, 1.7 million days of absence due to problems with managers and 450 thousand days of absence due to problems with colleagues or customers. The average cost of an absenteeism day varies between 200 and 400 euros. That alone means 1.8 billion euros in damage due to continued payment of wages for employers.

In addition, the newspapers report almost daily about people and organizations involved in transgressive, unethical behavior and its consequences. This resulted in high fines, ranging from a few hundred thousand to several millions. Per organization, that is. In addition to fines, organizations also have to deal with material and immaterial damage: investigation costs, business interruption, attorney fees, loss of reputation, loss of quality, and loss of employee engagement. In short, a costly and time-consuming affair.

A confidential adviser can prevent the escalation of conflicts and help increase transparency in the organisation. In addition, a confidential adviser can make a constructive contribution to creating a culture in which people feel safe to speak out and to hold each other accountable. By appointing a confidential advisor, people, both managers and employees, can be assisted with advice and assistance, and it can become clear more quickly what is going on in the organization, so that the organization can take appropriate actions in time.

The Working Conditions Act requires a policy in the field of employee welfare; this can be done, for example, by appointing a confidential advisor. Under the Dutch Civil Code, the employer may not disadvantage the employee as a result of reporting a suspicion of wrongdoing in good faith and properly.

Organizations with more than 50 employees are obliged under the House for Whistleblowers Act to record agreements about reporting social wrongdoing. The confidential adviser can also play a role here.

## Training to become a confidential adviser

### Registration

The Social Affairs and Employment Inspectorate requires that there is a well-trained confidential adviser in an organisation. Many organisations choose to have their internal confidential adviser trained to become a certified confidential adviser. And for those who want to work as an (independent) external confidential advisor, registration is indispensable. Registration means that the confidential adviser meets the requirements set by the National Association of Confidential Advisers (LVV): a successfully completed accredited course of at least four days. Merlijn's training courses are accredited and therefore offer the possibility to register as an LVV Register confidential advisor after passing the national exams. This registration is valid for 4 years. After that, you can apply for recertification, provided you have met the applicable requirements: 24 hours of continuing education, 32 hours of Intervention and 16 hours of other activities. You can also contact Merlijn for this.

### Dutch or English

Our training courses are given in both Dutch and English. The possibilities and the content are the same. Our trainers have a good command of the English language to give the training in English, but they are generally not native speakers.

### Open registration or in-company

All our training courses can also be given in-company.

Tailor-made training courses, tailored to the specific characteristics and wishes of an organization, can also be given. With an in-company training, after consultation about the specific wishes of your organization, a quotation is offered, both with regard to the content, logistics and location.

### Continuing education

Sometimes participants find it desirable to pay more attention to certain components, such as extra time for practice or more attention to integrity issues. We offer a number of expansion options especially for them. If you register for one or more extension training courses at the same time, you will receive a 10% combination discount on both the basic training and the extension

For a calendar about the dates, duration and costs of the various (follow-up) training courses, please refer to the secretariat or the website [www.merlijngroep.nl](http://www.merlijngroep.nl).

After the basic training, various continuing education courses are possible. For more information, see the individual brochures:

- [In-depth training Confidential Advisor Integrity](#) (2-day) (18 hours BNS)
- [Confidential Counsellor and Integrity](#) (1-day) (9 hours BNS)
- [In-depth training Confidential Counsellor Skills](#) (1 day) (6 p.m. BNS)
- [Deepening Rights and Obligations in the event of Absenteeism](#) (1-day) (- BNS)
- From drama triangle to compassion triangle in one day (1-day) (8 p.m. BNS)
- [Basic training to become a conflict coach](#) (6 days) (42 hours BNS)
- [Dealing with emotions and resistances](#) (2-day) (16 hours BNS)

## Information about 4-day basic Confidential Counsellor training

### General

During the **4-day basic training**, accredited by the LVV (National Association of Confidential Counsellors), you will learn the basics for working as a confidential counsellor. We discuss, among other things, the tasks and role of the confidential adviser, his place in the organisation, the legal context in which the confidential adviser operates. In addition, attention is paid to the skills that a confidential adviser needs and they are practiced. Three days the focus will be on the general frameworks of the work as a confidential adviser and on undesirable behaviour (Intimidation, sexual harassment, bullying, aggression and discrimination), one day will focus on integrity issues.

In addition to an extensive theoretical framework, this basic training course also pays extensive attention to training skills in preparation for the national oral skills exam.

### Accreditation by the LVV / Registration

After successfully following this basic training (step 1), you can register with the LVV to register for the Theory exam (step 2). This is followed by the oral exam (step 3) and registration (step 4). You will receive further information in the training or can be found on the LVV website. To remain certified, you must do annual peer review and refresher training.

### Target group

The training is aimed at people trained at higher professional education working and thinking level, who (want to) work as an internal or external confidential advisor. At least MBO + is required. So MBO alone is not enough. Merlijn will then have a trainer contact you to make a further inventory of what knowledge and skills you have that guarantee HBO thinking level. Participants want to master this position by increasing knowledge about the specific work as a confidential advisor, by strengthening their specific communication skills and/or by becoming aware of their position as a confidential advisor in the organization. Attention is also paid to the various specific areas of tension that confidential advisors have to deal with in relation to their position in the organization.

### Prior education

The prior education/level for this training is preferably higher professional education (level). At least MBO + is required. In addition, the profile of the candidate is at least as important. That is why we want to test the CV in advance and if in doubt we first have an interview.

### Study load

The extra study load, in addition to the mandatory attendance, is 13-15 hours, necessary for reading the syllabus, making the reflection report, among other things.

### Preparation and approach to the training

Three weeks before the start of the training, the syllabus and logistics course information will be sent to the participants. It is assumed that the syllabus has been read before the start of the training.

The training will be an alternation of providing information/theory, practicing and reflecting. The participants can practice with each other on the basis of provided case histories and attention will also be paid to the practical situation and specific individual learning objectives that suit the individual participant.

### Number of participants

A maximum of 10 participants can be registered for the training at Merlijn. The minimum number of participants is 4. The group is supervised by one permanent trainer. Guest trainers can be used for sub-topics.

### Practice

We consciously choose not to use training actors during this training. Playing the role of reporter gives a lot of insight into what it all means and therefore has enormous added value.

During the training, everyone will experience what it is like to be a confidential advisor through role plays. Several participants from previous training courses indicate that they would like to practice more. We offer you the opportunity to do so by offering the 1-day In-depth Training Skills at a reduced rate.

### Dates, Trainers, price and location

The current dates on which the training is given can be found on the website. For further information about the trainers, location and price, please also refer to [our website](#).

### Confidentiality of the training

In our training courses, we make extensive use of case histories from current practice, not only from the trainer(s), but also from the students. It should be clear that observing confidentiality and privacy rules is an absolute prerequisite to make this safe and possible for everyone.

### Participation ticket/assessment/resit

After completing the course, participants will receive a certificate of participation.

Immediately after the course, participants will receive a certificate of participation.

In addition, there will be a formal assessment of the trainer(s) of the reflection report as well as of the participation in the training. All this is assessed in accordance with the LVV guidelines with 'sufficient' or 'insufficient'. If you have a sufficient assessment of both participation in the training and the reflection report, you can take the next step: register for the national exams organized by the LVV.

### Overtaking

Finally, as a professional trainer, Merlijn always has an eye for the participant's situation. Course parts that could not be followed due to illness or other calamities must be made up in accordance with the requirements of the LVV in order to be certified. Of course, we offer the opportunity to do so free of charge.

### References

Recent references will be sent at the request of an aspiring participant.

### Lifetime warranty

We offer a lifetime warranty on this training. This means that participants can contact the trainer for questions about topics from the training for life.

## PE / PO training credits

For this training, 24 MfN PE points cat. 2 granted by the MfN.

As a certifying education and training institute, Merlijn is accredited by, among others, the National Association of Confidential Counsellors (LVV), the Mediatorsfederatie Nederland (MfN), the Dutch Bar Association (NOVA), the Dutch Association of Professional Coaches (NOBCO), SCOOR RMZO, the quality mark for Works Council trainers, Interpreters and Translators, the Royal Dutch Association of Notaries (KNB), the SAD certification committee (for employment experts) and the Dutch Association for Surgery (NVDH).



## Accommodation costs:

We get a lot of positive feedback on [our castle locations](#) and they are also cheaper than most regular training centers.

[Meet BerlageIn Amsterdam](#)



[Country house Oliphant near Rotterdam](#)



[The RuwenbergNear 's-Hertogenbosch](#)



[Castle de Vanenburg near Putten](#)



[Limbricht Castle near Sittard](#)



[Estate Huize Bergen near 's-Hertogenbosch](#)



What do the accommodation costs include: training location (training room plus 2 – 4 sub rooms), use of learning materials, coffee, tea, biscuits, sweets, fruit, soft drinks, lunch, snack and drinks.

If you want to spend the night and/or dine, please contact the relevant location. Merlijn has negotiated a discount for participants in our training courses.

## Content of the training

The training focuses on knowledge about the role and powers of the confidential adviser, legal knowledge, the position of the confidential adviser in the organisation and the attitude of the confidential adviser. In addition, attention is paid to practicing relevant communication skills.

In an interactive way, the participant is invited to put into words, experience and, if necessary, change his or her assumptions and beliefs in the field of undesirable behaviour and dilemmas.

The training will be an alternation of covering theory, practicing, experiencing and reflecting.

The participants' own case histories can be a guideline in the exercises during the training blocks. Specific attention is paid to individual learning objectives. To this end, the participant will reflect on his performance during the course.

### *Legal frameworks:*

- Laws and regulations
- What is undesirable behaviour?
- Forms of undesirable behaviour
- Rules for confidential counsellors
- Complaints procedure
- Reporting
- Profiling and information

### *Communication skills:*

- Basic communication
- Types of questions
- Conversation technique: listening, summarizing and asking further questions
- Drama triangle
- Feedback rules
- Dealing with emotions
- Transfer and countertransfer
- Conflict theory
- Own frame of reference and reflection

### *Position in the organization*

- Coordinating with the client/employer of his task performance and orientation towards the organization
- Positioning his/her presence and working method within the organization
- Profiling and information
- Reporting
- The confidential adviser's actions must be in line with the existing PSA policy and the associated existing complaints procedures
- Possibly in combination with other observations and recommendations for actions related to conflict management and/or culture change processes.

### *Teaching methods*

- Experiential exercises
- Practicing with (own) case histories
- Role play
- Graduation pieces
- Preparatory homework assignments
- Analysing various films and evaluating them for learning objectives
- Working in subgroups

## Attainment targets

After following the training:

- You will know the legal framework and the relevant laws and regulations;
- you therefore have knowledge of the rights, obligations and powers as a confidential adviser;
- you will be able to distinguish between undesirable behaviour, labour disputes, integrity issues and (suspected) wrongdoing and the associated procedures;
- you will know the similarities and differences in your performance when it comes to Undesirable Behaviour and Integrity Issues and you will be aware of the bottlenecks in the merger of the VPI and VPOO functions;
- You will know the task content and task demarcation in the position of confidential adviser integrity;
- you will be able to recognise and identify the different forms of undesirable behaviour;
- you will have insight into the playing field of the confidential advisor, both internally and externally;
- you will know how to deal with a (potential) report: you will be able to map out the story of the reporter and act appropriately;
- You will have insight into conversation techniques and you can apply them effectively;
- you will be aware of your own pitfalls and able to deal with the emotional processes associated with the report;
- you will be able to build and maintain a relationship with managers and the Works Council and advise them on confidential issues;
- you know how and when to refer.
- you will have insight into what is meant by integrity and acting with integrity; a concept with different meanings in different contexts, and can test this against the different criteria of acting with integrity.
- You will have knowledge of integrity issues and relevant laws and regulations relating to integrity and can apply them in line with your role as a confidential advisor.
- You will have insight into the force fields in a case with regard to integrity, both informally and formally, both internally and externally.
- you have become thoroughly acquainted with the way in which a conversation is conducted with a reporter in which attention is paid to the emotional care as well as to the facts of a suspicion of a violation of integrity or abuse;
- you are able to discuss with the reporter whether there is a violation of integrity or a suspicion of wrongdoing;
- you are aware of the possibility of consulting with the reporter about the factors that determine which path is taken within the options that are available;
- you can inform employees about policy, the position of confidential advisor integrity and about protocols and procedures with regard to the integrity policy;
- You will be able to reflect on your own behaviour with regard to integrity, you will be aware of your exemplary role and you will know that you sometimes have to act on your own compass.

## Program '4-day Basic Training Confidential Advisor'

### Day 1

#### Morning program

- 09.30 - 10.00 : Reception with coffee tea  
10.00 - 10.30 : Welcome, explanation of the entire programme, household business, introduction to participants / requirements registration / Inventory of learning objectives  
10.30 - 11.15 : What are undesirable behaviours? What is the impact for victims and organizations?  
11.15 - 11.30 : Break  
11.30 - 12.30 : Introduction to the assessment model LVV/phasing, communication and conversation techniques plus practice  
12.30 - 13.30 : Lunch

#### Afternoon program

- 13.30 - 14.30 : Role of the Confidential Advisor: demarcating the field of work and managing expectations  
14.30 - 14.45 : Break  
14.45 - 16.30 : Introduction to training skills plus exercise opening phase Demarcating the field of work VP / Empathic listening / Non-verbal / summarizing / reflection professional development (RPO)  
16.30 - 17.00 : Debriefing, time for reflection

### Day 2

#### Morning program

- 09.30 - 10.00 : Reception with coffee tea  
10.00 - 10.15 : Introduction of this day and review of block 1  
10.15 - 11.15 : Your own attitude as a confidant  
11.15 - 11.30 : Break  
11.30 - 12.30 : Practice exploration phase: providing structure / point of view to importance / solution-focused questions / dealing with emotions and Resistances / Intervention Techniques and Reflection Professional Development (RPO)  
12.30 - 13.30 : Lunch

#### Afternoon program

- 13.30 - 15.00 : Introduction plus practice option phase/finishing/next steps / Summarizing essence and feeling / reflection professional Development (RPO)  
15.00 - 15.15 : Break  
15.15 - 16.15 : Legal framework  
16.15 - 16.45 : Conflict theory  
16.45 - 17.00 : Debriefing, reflection and homework assignment

## Day 3

### Morning program

- 09.30 - 10.00 : Reception with coffee tea
- 10.00 - 11.15 : Exploration: Integrity and integrity issues
- 11.15 - 11.30 : Break
- 11.30 - 12.00 : Professional Integrity of the Confidential Advisor
- 12.00 - 13.00 : Integrity Exercise Reception and Support  
Information advice
- 13.00 - 14.00 : Lunch

### Afternoon program

- 14.00 - 15.00 : Continuation of the exercise
- 15.15 - 15.30 : Break
- 15.30 - 16.45 : Advice and dilemma
- 16.30 - 17.00 : Debriefing and conclusion

## Day 4

### Morning program

- 09.30 - 10.00 : Reception with coffee tea
- 10.00 - 10.30 : Welcome, looking back on day 1, 2 and 3 on the basis of open questions test and explanation, questions and tips theory exam
- 10.30 - 11.15 : Annual plan and annual report
- 11.15 - 11.30 : Break
- 11.30 - 12.00 : Exercise Strategic Opportunities for the confidential adviser internal and external
- 12.00 - 13.00 : Lunch

### Afternoon program

- 13.00 - 15.15 : Integral exercise
- 15.15 - 15.30 : Break
- 15.30 - 16.15 : Continuation exercise Loose ends, registration,
- 16.15 - 16.45 : Proof of participation, Exams, Registration, deadline and mandatory refresher course
- 16.45 - 17.00 : Evaluation
- 17.00 ..... : Merlin Borrel

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

Merlijn and the professionals affiliated with her can take a lot of the work around confidential counsellors off the hands of organisations. The services we offer include:

### Advice and support organization

- providing well-trained, certified and experienced external Confidential Counsellors for Undesirable Behaviour and Integrity
- providing well-trained and experienced members/chairman of a complaints committee for undesirable behaviour
- support in drawing up and implementing a policy aimed at preventing Undesirable Behaviour and promoting an Integrity Culture
- drafting and implementing a complaints procedure on Undesirable Behaviour
- drafting and implementing a whistleblowing scheme for integrity issues
- coaching managers in dealing with Undesirable Behaviour and Integrity Issues
- sparring with managers when dealing with integrity issues and the dilemmas involved
- investigation of complaints or reports

## Other activities for confidential counsellors

### Learning from each other

Exchanging experiences with fellow confidential counsellors is extremely useful. Merlin is also happy to facilitate this. We do this by, among other things:

#### **Intervision meetings.**

One of the LVV's requirements for recertification is peer review, spread over four years. Merlijn offers intervision meetings under the guidance of experienced coaches in the field of intervision. Meetings can be followed in a fixed group. In addition, Merlijn offers the possibility to participate in separate intervision meetings, which are organized once every two months.

#### **Coaching and supervision.**

A number of confidential counsellors appear to need personal guidance in the practice of the profession. Further supervision, training 'on the job' and consultation can be offered under conditions to be agreed upon.

#### **Information afternoons and evenings.**

There our relations get to know each other, the trainers and the programs. There we exchange practical experiences, ask questions and discuss the confidential advisor and related themes. Those

Meetings are therefore open to all those interested in the confidential advisor, both former participants in our confidential advisor training courses and prospective participants. [View the dates here](#)

#### **Group-based return days.**

If there is sufficient enthusiasm among a group of participants, return days will be organized especially for that group. The theory is briefly refreshed. Subsequently, after evaluation and exchange of practical experiences and dilemmas that have emerged, the participants are given the opportunity to practice individual points of attention again in a role play. The individual agenda with points of attention is evaluated and supplemented.

## Merlin Group

Merlijn Groep is a dynamic and multidisciplinary organization with a focus on professional communication and conflict management, both on a business and personal level. The business partners affiliated with Merlijn Group represent the interests of our customers in respectful and groundbreaking relationships with high ambition and passion for sustainable and measurable results.

### **We start from the own qualities and creativity of our customers**

That is why we have been inspired for decades by Merlin, the advisor to the legendary King Arthur and his Round Table knights. Merlin lived his life from back to front, 'back in time', so that he could have experiences and wisdom from the future. Merlin did not use this power to provide others with ready-made advice, but he did provide them with thoughts and suggestions that would help them use their own wisdom. In this special way, the counselor Merlin was a master of communication.

We help our clients to discover, develop and learn to apply the specific aspects of their own strengths for themselves and their organisation. We see it as our task to make all our knowledge and know-how available to them and also to assist them in their development or needs of the moment in word and deed.

### **Professionals for professionals**

Merlijn Groep offers a wide range of products from practice-oriented training and expert support and advice in the field of confidential counselling, employee participation, conflict coaching, legal skills and negotiation.

It is Merlijn Group's ambition to always deliver demonstrable, distinctive quality, both in terms of our substantive services, our knowledge and professional skills and in terms of the sustainable application thereof. We continuously strive for excellent results.

We are goal-oriented in all our services. Part of those services are our training courses. We always offer opportunities to practice acquired insights and skills and to test them in practice. We have experienced that we achieve results from an honest dialogue in which humor and clarity help to stay sharp and to be able to translate the practice situations into daily work.

### **Trust**

We ensure that Merlijn is an organization that people have complete confidence in. This applies to both the content and the relationship. We therefore continuously pay attention to customer needs analyses, evaluations and research and base the innovation of our products and the growth of our own qualities on this.

## Merlijn Groep: the customer in the picture

