

HELP WHERE WE ARE

advice to low-threshold services in municipalities



CHANGE FACTORY

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The photos are of participants from the advice collection

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ABOUT THE ADVICE COLLECTION

Theme

In recent years, low-threshold services have been highlighted as an important solution for Norway. The help will to a greater extent be moved to the municipalities. With the work on the new mental health escalation plan, low-threshold services have been clearly raised as an important way to go. For this to be successful, the authorities have to know what is needed for these services to be experienced as helpful for children and young people. Changefactory therefore decided to collect advice for low-threshold services in the municipalities, and gather advice from previous qualitative surveys conducted by Changefactory, in an advice collection.

Participants and collecting advice

The advice collection presents advice from 110 Pros (young people in Changefactory) aged 13-21. The advice was given in sessions, weekend gatherings and summer camp in CF, 2021-2022. We also present advice from an advice collection and a knowledge report, both of which were published in 2020.

The Pros gave advice to the services or the help they have experience with, and about what the help that is given in low-threshold in the municipalities should look like. The advice was given in group sessions and creative assignments where the participants used film, pictures and text to illustrate advice.

Information and consent

The Pros receive information about the topic to be worked on, ahead of sessions, weekend gatherings and summer camps. They also get to know that it is voluntary to participate and that their participation is anonymous.

Pros in Changefactory agree to participate as Pros and to give advice on different topics. If Pros are under 16, legal guardians also give consent. Consent to participate in photos is collected separately.

About the method

The advice collection was carried out using the Changemethod. This is a participatory research method to obtain in-depth knowledge to use in change work and equal collaboration with children and young people. It is developed based on Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) and is built on answers from children and young people about how participating in a

survey can feel safe. The Changemethod consists of a value basis, working principles and a number of concrete tools, to gather experiences and advice directly from children and young people. The tools are creative and visual, to contribute to making it safe, fun and useful for many different children and young people.

Summary of the knowledge

The advice collected was sorted thematically. Repeated answers from the young people is summarised in this advice collection as knowledge from children and young people. The language used is as similar as possible to the language the young people have used. The knowledge from children and young people is not linked to theory.

Explanation of words

Talking-person: The word "talking-person in the school" is used in the advice collection as a collective term for people in school that children can talk to. This can be guidance counsellors, school social workers, or other adults who work in the school.

Youth outreach services: In this advice collection, advice is given for two different types of youth outreach services. As most have used the word "youth outreach services", this is used. The advice for the youth outreach services is advice for both of these.

Explanation of the parts

In PART 1, advice is presented on how the low-threshold services in the municipalities should be going forward.

In PART 2, advice is presented for low-threshold services that exist today:

The youth outreach services, talking-persons in schools, and the school health service. In this section advice from the qualitative survey ANGRY ON THE OUTSIDE, HURTING ON THE INSIDE and the advice collection TALKING KINDLY (both from 2020) is also presented.

THANKS TO THE PROS

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU WHO PARTICIPATED BY GIVING IMPORTANT ADVICE. THANK YOU FOR DOING THIS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO COME AFTER YOU, SO THAT THEY CAN GET QUICK AND USEFUL HELP, WHERE THEY LIVE.

KNOWLEDGE FROM
CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE





KNOWLEDGE FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ADVICE FOR GOOD LOW-THRESHOLD SERVICES

MOST IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN GOOD LOW-THRESHOLD SERVICES

In this section, advice from Pros to low-threshold services in the municipalities is presented. The Pros have been asked to give advice on how to help where they live should be and look like, for them to be helpful for children and young people. They have also been asked what a safe adult is like in a place like this.

The advice on what is most important for children and young people in a good low-threshold service are described on the following pages.

Opening hours, contact and information

Open a lot

It has to be open in the evening and on weekends. Ideally, it is open 24 hours a day, but it is at least possible to contact them around the clock.

Problems and hurtful feelings can happen at any time, also in the evening and at night. If we can contact you when we need to, it will also be easier to contact you before things become more difficult.

Low threshold to contact

We have to be able to call, send a message or contact you on social media, so that it's easy and simple. We ourselves have to be able to contact someone on the spot when we are having a difficult time. Bad feelings and thoughts can come at any time.

Without a referral

We have to be able to get there, without a referral. Then it will be possible to get help with small things before they become bigger. If we have to go through others and get a referral, before we can get to the place, it is not certain that we will be able to let you know when we are having a difficult time. We need to be able to get there and talk to someone right away.

Give enough information

We need to be given information about:

- where the place is
- who and what the place is for
- that we can get help there
- who works there, how they work and when
- what it's like there
- that there are activities there that we can take part in
- that we can always go there

How you can give information:

- put up posters in schools, municipal health centres for young people, Children and Adolescents' Psychiatric Outpatient Services (BUP) and other places we are
- that adults who work there can visit schools and talk about it
- that teachers and adults in school can talk about the place

QUOTES:

You can't decide that tomorrow at 3pm it will strike, you can wake up in the middle of the night and need help, it can happen at any time. Time does not follow the psyche. It is not always possible to take a deep breath and wait and contact them later.

It could be very good, for people who don't dare speak to adults they know or have around them in everyday life. Then they can rather just go to this house. Then they don't have to tell people if they find it uncomfortable.

The more steps you have to go through, the more room there is for misunderstandings. It really depends on who the people in the emergency room are, for whether you are going to get more help or not. The more steps you cut, the less room there is for misunderstandings and you avoid cutting off people who need help.

All children go to school, so there has to be an entrance ticket where all children get information about it and what they can do to help, so that it won't be such a big step to contact them when they do need it.

Possibly, those who work there, not the manager, because then it will be scary. But that [adults] there. I think that if they had been at school today, and I had thought she looked a bit safe and it sounded like a good place. And then I have one familiar face, so when I get there not everyone is unknown, and I wouldn't need to spend a long time getting to know everyone first.

Safe adults and helpful help

Adults who feel safe

Adults who feel safe are warm, pleasant and welcoming. They show that they care and are kind, and show that they want to help. They listen to what we say and take it seriously. They are curious about the reasons why.

When we notice that you are there for us and want to help, it becomes easier to feel safe with you and tell honestly what we feel and think.

Let us choose who we want to talk to

It's nice if there are different people working there, both people with an education and people who have their own experiences of having a difficult time. We are different and feel safe with different adults. It is wise to let us choose who we want to talk to. If we get to choose, it can be safer and easier to tell the most important things.

Listen to us and be curious

We ask you to listen and be curious about what we do or show and what the reason is. We notice that you are really listening when you ask follow-up questions, remember things we have said previously, and take what we say seriously. When we notice that you are listening, and really need to know from us, we will also tell you more. Then you can help us more easily.

Check if it is safe

If we don't want to talk to you, don't nag or ask the same question several times. Instead, check if there is something that can make it feel safer for us in the situation, and ask what it is wise for you to ask us about or how it is wise for you to ask questions.

Ask what we need

You have to ask us what we need help with and find out together with us what type of help is best for us. We often know very well what we need help with and what can be helpful for us. In order for us to tell this, you have to show that you want and really need to know what we think.

Figure out together with us

You have to ask us what we think so that the help will be useful for us. When you ask, you have to be curious about what we think, and not have decided in advance. When we notice that you want to know from us, it will be easier for us to open up and talk about what is important.

Examples of things you can help us with:

- talk about things that are painful or difficult
- teach us how to deal with difficult thoughts and feelings in a positive way
- normal things like washing clothes and cooking
- school and homework

Do activities together with us

It's nice if you do nice things with us. Then we will get to know each other more and for some it can be easier to talk about things when you do an activity at the same time.

Let us participate in hiring

When you are hiring, it would be nice if we could take part in it. It is us who are going to be there, and be with the adults. Then it is important that those who work there seem kind to us and are able to listen and talk to young people in ways that feel right to us. For example, we can participate in interviews, where we can help ask questions or have role plays. Or adults can come and have a trial period, and we can help assess whether they should be hired afterwards. If children and young people are involved in hiring, you can be more sure that those the place is made for, feel safe with the people who work there.

QUOTES:

The most important thing is that they have their heart in their work: that they are there because they want you to be well.

There have to be kind adults there, so we feel safe when we get there. And that it kind of should feel good.

The adults there have to be good at listening. Could be talking to someone and feel that they are not listening or listening to what you say, then you feel that they don't understand you or that they don't want to listen to you.

Mustn't ask in a educating way, have to ask as if they are curious. To take things as I say it, that they do not assume anything.

They have to listen to what I have to say. Because I'm the one who knows, they aren't psychic, only I can know how it should be. They can't guess it.

The adult can present alternatives if the child thinks it is difficult. It is not always the first option that fits, but it is important not to give up. Because there is always a solution.

If we're going to talk, ask what we're going to talk about, accept a no, accept if we want to talk to someone else. Then we can talk to that person (...) has to do with the relationship and where you feel safe, safety is the most important thing.

They should not have a large profile, they do not need to have worked for many years as a police officer or nurse. It's not the most important thing, but if you manage to meet young people properly and importantly. You have to be of good use to them and do it safely.

Brought someone to the interviews, of the young people or the children, who are familiar with the place and have been there for a while - they should talk with them. Adults can say many things that sound good to the adult or leader, but children may have other values that are important.



The place

Easy to get there

It is good if the place is where we are, and it has to be easy to get there. When it is easy to get there, it becomes easier to go there and easier to want to go.

Cosy with colours

The building has to look like a normal house, and not hospital-like. When it looks normal, it feels okay to go there. Inside the house it has to be cosy, with different rooms. For example, there could be a kitchen where we can cook food or bake, a room where we can talk that is a bit hidden so that not everyone can see that we are going there, and a common room where we can do activities. It is also important that there are colours there. There have to be colours that bring joy and make it feel warm.

Safe place

It has to be a place where we can relax, have fun, but also talk if we need it. It has to feel safe.

It has to be a place where everyone can go, no matter how we feel and no matter how we show it. It is important that we know that we are welcome, in order for us to feel like going there and want to be there. To make us feel welcome and like it is our place, we can help choose colours, furniture and which activities there could be. If there are activities, it is easier to get to know other young people.

Suggested activities:

- baking night
- billiards, darts, ping-pong
- table tennis
- watching movies
- karaoke night
- playstation
- shuffleboard
- making music in a music room
- painting
- playing cards
- growing things in a greenhouse
- sewing
- going for walks

QUOTES:

It's all about the feeling - and all of this is about creating space to create trust. Your environment affects how you feel. When a room feels cold, it affects how you feel in it. It will take more to become comfortable with people in the room.

It has to be a place where you can hang out, get out what's on your mind and a place where you are always welcome (...) being able to be yourself there. The fact that you should be able to be exactly as you are and no matter how you look, there is open-mindedness

It isn't certain that everyone will open up, but that they're there just to be able to be safe when they can't be at home. The most important thing then is that you can go there without telling everything. While someone wants to tell everything and that's okay too.

That it can be a place where you can be with friends, but also available psychologists or whatever to talk to and who, maybe not that they don't do it so formally, a little more low-threshold.

A combination, if you can say that, in several places where young people who have a good time together can be together with adults and who are able to talk properly together, and have a safe place (...) makes it nice to come there, makes you want to go there if you're having a hard time, and that there's always someone there to talk to.

It can help to create a small sense of belonging, that you are a bit involved in making the place a bit yours in a way. That the place can become so safe that it is like a second home.

CHECKLIST FOR GOOD LOW-THRESHOLD SERVICES

Opening hours, contact and info

- open a lot
- low-threshold for contacting them
- can go there without a referral
- gives information about the place
- gives information in schools and places where we are

Safe adults

- are warm, nice and helpful
- show that they care and are kind
- show that they want to help
- listen to what we say and takes it seriously
- are curious about what lies behind

Useful help

- listen to us and are curious
- check if it is safe
- ask us what we need
- figure out together with us
- do activities together with us
- allow us to participate in hiring

The place

- it's easy to get there
- looks like an normal house
- is cosy, with colours
- is a place everyone can go to, no matter what



KNOWLEDGE FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
ADVICE TO YOUTH
OUTREACH SERVICES,
TALKING-PERSONS IN
SCHOOLS,
PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES

YOUTH OUTREACH SERVICES

Here, advice for youth outreach services is presented. Advice from Pros is presented first, then advice from the survey qualitative ANGRY ON THE OUTSIDE, HURTING ON THE INSIDE is presented.

Advice from the Pros (2021-2022)

Advice from Pros, collected during sessions, weekend gatherings and summer camps, spring 2021-autumn 2022.

The Pros have been asked about:

- How do youth outreach services have to be?
- What do youth outreach services have to do to get children to talk honestly with them?
- How can youth outreach services approach young people on the streets?

Advice from ANGRY ON THE OUTSIDE, HURTING ON THE INSIDE (2020)

A selection of advice from the qualitative survey ANGRY ON THE OUTSIDE, HURTING ON THE INSIDE from 2020. In the qualitative survey, 101 children and young people aged 13-20, who have been angry, used violence against adults and children and young people, have given advice to, among others, youth outreach services.

Advice from Pros (2021-2022)

Youth outreach services have to:

- smile
- be friendly
- show warmth
- be self-assured
- be yourself

It is important to us how they are as people, that they are safe to talk to and that they manage to make it safe for us.

Meet us as people

When you approach us on the street, you have to tell us honestly who you are, where you come from and what you do. It's nice if you don't stand out a lot, and wear normal clothes. It is also good if you wear a work badge so you can show it if we are sceptical of you.

When you come over to us, ask if you can talk to us and do this in a kind way. Be open and interested in us. Then it will be easier to talk to you. It is important that you ask if it is okay that you talk with us before you start doing this. If we don't want to, you can give us your contact information so that we can get in touch later if we want to.

Get to know us

Tell us a little about who you are, what you like to do and what you do for a living. This makes it easier for us to talk to you. When we meet you on the street it becomes even more important that we get to know each other and get to know who you are for it to feel safe and not scary that you approach us. When we know who you are, it will be easier to get in touch if we are having a difficult time.

Give enough information

You have to give us information about what you can help with and how we can get in touch with you. It's nice if you invite us to activities, so that we can get to know you better. If we get to know you and feel safe with you, it will be easier to get help.

Give us information about:

- that you have a duty to report concerns and a duty of confidentiality and what that means
- who you are
- what you do and what we can be involved in
- how we can contact you
- that we can talk to you about difficult things

"What works there is that they come to us and talk. And let us know that they have a duty of confidentiality. They go around the shoppingcentre and it is important (...). They don't share what you say with others"



Advice to youth outreach services from **ANGRY ON THE OUTSIDE, HURTING ON THE INSIDE (2020)**

Agree on what information to share

It's important that you always tell the children that you won't share anything before you've made an agreement with the child about how it will be done. It's also important that after each conversation with a child you figure out what can be shared, to whom, when it should be shared and how it should be done. If the child says no to you sharing anything, you need to find out why the child is saying no, in order to protect the trust the child has in you.

Believe children

Children need you to believe them. Believing children means that when they tell you something, you believe their experience of the situation. You take it in and ask more questions to understand. There often aren't any facts, but there are different experiences. That's why you always have to take children's experiences seriously and believe them. Children notice that you believe them when you react with emotions, ask questions and don't speak against the child's experience.

Understand that there's a reason behind it

Children understand that you can get scared when they use violence. But they need you to understand that there's a reason why and show them that you understand this. When a child has been involved in a violent incident, it's important that you, in a humble way, are curious about what was behind it. Children don't need you to tell them that it isn't okay or allowed, they often know this. When children have grown up with a lot of bad things, ice builds up around the heart, and reprimanding or lecturing the child only makes that ice thicker. That's why you always have to wonder why things turned out that way and ask the child what the child needs to feel better inside. Don't focus on the action itself, it can take you down the wrong path.

Listen carefully when the child talks

Children can tell by your face and body language whether you're really listening. In all conversations with children, you have to be open to what the children say and want to listen. You can't go into a conversation with all the questions ready, it will feel like you don't really want to talk with the child. When children talk, it's important to show that you're paying attention and care.

Decide in the best interests of the child

Before deciding on solutions, you always have to listen carefully to what the child thinks. If the child hasn't been able to talk to the Child Protection System in a way that feels safe, you can't really decide anything in their lives. What the Child Protection System decides can affect the child's life. What the child says has to be given a lot of weight when something is going to be decided. You have to come up with solutions together with the child and they have to be based on what the child themselves thinks is smart. You have to think it through very carefully if you're going to decide on a solution that's not based on what the child has said.

Collaborate with the child about meetings

For meetings to feel safe and for the child to see the point in taking part in them, the child has to be collaborated with about how meetings should be, in a safe way. Ask the child where and when it's good for them to have the meeting, and who the child wants to bring. If there's someone the child doesn't want in the meeting, ask the child why that is and take it seriously. Figure out with the child in advance what the topic of the meeting should be, ask the child what they want to get out of the meeting, and talk with the child about what is and isn't okay to talk about.

Make an agreement with the child what kind of signs they can give if they become uncomfortable and want you to stop or let the other adults know.

Be honest even when you're scared

Children often understand that child protection workers also can become scared. They also know that many adults hide their fear. Children can often still see the fear in adults, for example if they become strict, quiet or talk with a strange voice. It's important for children that you as a child protection worker are honest about what you feel and talk about insecurity or fear. Saying that you also feel unsafe or afraid can make it easier for children to feel and talk about feelings. Children need adults who are good role models, and it becomes safer for children when adults are honest.

Show warmth and stop in a safe way

When you're calm, speak kindly and are warm, children often calm down. Sometimes children can still be desperate, angry or aggressive. Say that you want to help. No child wants to scare or hurt others. They want to be stopped, but they want you to stop them like a child who's hurting. Never stop to punish, but stop to help. Children have to be stopped in safe ways. It helps if you're honest and show warmth.

If you've tried with honesty and warmth and the child is still feeling a lot of pain, you can try to stop the child safely by holding around them like a hug. Tell them that you don't want the child to hurt themselves or others. Explain to the child that it's because you care about the child so much and wish them well. Release the child as soon as the danger is over.

TALKING-PERSONS IN SCHOOLS

Here advice for talking-persons in schools is presented . Advice from Pros is presented first, then advice from the qualitative survey ANGRY ON THE OUTSIDE, HURTING ON THE INSIDE is presented.

Advice from the Pros (2021-2022)

Advice from Pros, collected during sessions, weekend gatherings and summer camps, spring 2021-autumn 2022.

The Pros have been asked about:

- How do talking-persons in school have to be in order for children to be able to talk honestly with them?
- What do talking-persons in school have to do to get children to talk honestly with them?
- What does a talking-room at school have to look like and be like?

Talking-persons in school are school counsellors, school social workers or other adults who work in the school.

Advice from ANGRY ON THE OUTSIDE, HURTING ON THE INSIDE (2020)

A selection of advice from the qualitative survey ANGRY ON THE OUTSIDE, HURTING ON THE INSIDE from 2020. In the qualitative survey, 101 children aged 13-20, who have used violence against adults and children and young people, have given advice to, among other things, talking-persons in schools.

Advice from Pros (2021-2022)

Talking-persons in the school have to:

- smile and be nice
- be considerate and caring
- be positive
- be open and understanding
- be inclusive
- be humble
- be eager and energetic
- be attentive

Show that you want to help

Talking-persons in school have to have a kind body language. In talks, you have to show that you're paying attention and lean forward to actually show that you're listening to what we have to say. Then we can feel safe.

You have to show that you care. We notice it on your face and body if you care. We want to feel that you're listening to us and want to help us. You have to show warmth, be curious and offer a bit of yourself, for example by being a bit silly.

Be visible at school

Visit classrooms and tell us who you are, where you are stationed, when we can come to you and what you can help with. It is wise that you visit during the first week of school, and for a short period after. Then we'll know we have an opportunity to talk to you.

Smile when you walk past us and when you see us. If we see you smiling and talking to everyone, it is easier for us to come to you if we want to talk.

Start activities and include everyone

You have to pay attention in the school yard. If someone is sitting alone, ask how they are doing, and maybe start an activity. For example, you can start activities or games during breaks, that everyone can participate in. It is nice that we see that you include everyone.

You can also have some regular activities every week, like board games, table tennis or volleyball. If there is something that happens regularly that everyone can join in on, it can make it a little safer. And we can bond with you, and with other pupils. If you make time for playing and spend time building relationships with pupils, it may be easier to go to you.

In talks with pupils

Get to know us

It's nice if you don't get straight to the point, but spend some time getting to know us. For example, we can play a game, go for a walk, or just do something. The first conversation should be about getting to know each other.

Take us seriously

It is important that you are kind and understanding. Listen to what we have to say and take it seriously. No matter how big or small you think the problem is. Follow our pace and adapt. You have to show that you can bear to hear what we have to say. If we are not sure that you can bear it, it will be difficult to tell.

Find solutions together with us

It is important that you talk to us before you do anything. Try to find solutions together with us. Then we will feel respected and that you take our situation very seriously. When we feel respected and that you take us seriously, we will gain trust in you.

Have a cosy talking-room

The school may have a talking-room where you can come if you need a break. It's nice if it isn't grey and sterile, but homely with plants, colours and posters with kind words. Pupils at school can give input on how the room should be.

"I had a wonderful school social worker, so it matters a lot, and it is important to have them there in order to have a warm school environment that is nice to come to at school"



Advice to youth outreach services from **ANGRY ON THE OUTSIDE, HURTING ON THE INSIDE (2020)**

Meet with warmth, stop safely

Meet children with humility and warmth. Children often need love from you adults in school to be safe there. Don't meet children coldly or harshly, even when they've done bad things. Remember that it's about something that hurts inside them that they maybe haven't gotten to talk about. They need human warmth just as much as any other child. School has a great opportunity to give children that love.

When children are about to do something hurtful or bad to themselves or others, they need adults to stop them safely. Children understand that adults can become scared when children have such strong expressions, but on the inside they're also scared or sad, and sometimes despairing or desperate. They need adults to tell them that they know children aren't mean but are hurting. Children need adults who tell them they care about them no matter what they do. They need adults who dare to come close and hold them, and tell them that things are going to be okay

Reach to get to the feelings

When something bad happens and you understand that it's about something that's difficult or hurting inside the child, you have to try to reach in. You can tell the child that you know they don't want to do any harm or to be mean, and that you understand it's about something inside the child. Questions you could ask can be: "Can you tell me what's happening now? How does it feel inside? Do you want to tell me why it turns out the way it does? Did I do something that turned out bad for you?" If the child continues to be very angry, you can talk a bit about how you feel inside. If you feel unsure, feel sorry on the child's behalf or if you feel afraid when the child is angry, tell them that too. You can say that you're trying your best, but that you don't quite know how to help. It can help the child if you talk a bit about your feelings as an adult. You can support the child by being honest and showing the child that feelings aren't dangerous

Assess risks of parental contact

The adults in school always have to remember that they can't know how parents are for children. You can contribute to making it worse for children at home with more violence and control. Before contacting parents, always check with the child what the child thinks. Show that you want to understand whether it's safe for the child if the school contacts their parents. If children either express through body language or say that their parents shouldn't be notified, you as an adult have to dig deeper to find out why. For example, you can say: "I know many children have a hard time at home, and that it can get worse if the school calls home. Could it become bad for you if I call home and talk to them about what happened? Can the two of us call together? I won't share what you answer now with anyone else before we've talked about how. You know your parents best and know best how it will be for you if we call home now. I want to do what's safest for you." If the child says you can't call home now, you need to find out why. Once that's done, you can assess the risk together with the child.

Make an agreement about what to share

The adults always have to collaborate with the children if something is to be shared. This applies both to parents and to other professionals. Agree at the start of a conversation in what way what the child says can be protected. This is absolutely fundamental for children to gain trust in you. You'll only have the opportunity to help when children trust that they're able to tell you about what hurts. If you think something has to be shared, ask the child what they think about it. If the child doesn't want you to share it, you have to find out why. If the child thinks it's okay for you to share it, find out together with the child what, to whom and when it will be shared.

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES

Here, advice for public health nurses is presented. Advice from the Pros is presented first, then advice from the advice collection TALKING KINDLY is presented.

Advice from the Pros (2021-2022)

Advice from Pros, collected at sessions, weekend gatherings and summer camps, from the spring 2021-autumn 2022.

The Pros have been asked about:

- How do public health nurses have to be in order for children to be able to talk to them about what is important?
- What do public health nurses have to do to get children to talk to them about what is important?

Advice from TALKING KINDLY(2020)

A selection of advice from the advice collection TALKING KINDLY from 2020. In the advice collection, 900 children aged 10-20 have given advice to public health nurses.

Advice from Pros (2021-2022)

Public health nurses have to:

- meet us with a smile
- show with their face and body that they want to help
- show with their face and body that they are listening and are interested
- talk about and show feelings

Even if you say that you're listening, you have to show it with your body too. Smile and show with your body that you want to help and are interested in what we have to say. When we see, feel and hear that you are kind and want to help, we can open up. If we don't feel you want to hear, we won't talk.

Be humble and compassionate

Humility is important. Be honest if you notice something is becoming wrong. If you do something wrong or something goes wrong, say you're sorry. Then we will be able to gain trust in you.

It is important that you show that you are compassionate. You can do that by smiling, meeting us with warmth, asking if we want a hug, asking if it's ok to ask what we need. It can be scary if we know that those who are supposed to help think they know much more than us. Remember that we know the most about our lives and know what we need.

Get to know us and ask questions

Start by getting to know us before you start asking about what is important. Tell us about yourself. For example, what you like and your interests. Getting to know you a little makes it easier to tell you things.

Ask us what is important for us to talk about. When you ask questions, keep them open but concrete, so that we understand what you are wondering about. Then it will be easier to answer honestly. Ask questions about what we say. Then we understand that you're paying attention to what we have been telling you.

Make an agreement with us before anything is shared

If something is going to be shared, please tell us honestly what you're thinking. Ask us what we think about it. Remember that if information is shared without us knowing about it, it can become unsafe for us. It can also be difficult for us to tell you later. When we know you collaborate with us, before you share anything, it becomes easier to trust you.

Give us enough information

Give information about:

- what you can help us with
- what we can talk to you about
- where you are
- when you are at school
- what happens to what we tell you

"She wanted to hear from me, wanted to know how it could be better from me. Got respect for her. It worked well"



Advice to public health nurses from **TALKING KINDLY (2020)**

Want to understand

In order for us to feel that there is a point in talking to you, we have to feel that you really want to understand as best you can. When we come to tell something, we quickly feel it if you actually want to know what it's about.

It's very difficult to understand someone else's situation. The most important thing for us is not that you understand what it's like to be us, because only we know that. The most important thing is that you understand that we have the feelings we have in the situation we are in. And that we react the way we do.

We almost never say everything right away. We need to be sure that you want to know and want to understand, before we tell you everything. If there is something you do not understand, it's important that you don't just move on, but wonder about what lies behind. If you don't wonder, you could be missing out on a lot. It's much better that you're honest with us if you don't understand, rather than to pretend to understand. Instead of saying "I understand", instead ask how it feels for us.

Show emotions

Respond to what we say. It's nice that you show emotions. Explain to us honestly what you're feeling. Then we know that you listen with your heart and that what we say is important. If you don't react, we can think that what we've experienced is not so serious. If we tell you about something that feels painful for us, then it's very nice to be met with feelings and reactions and to be told "you should never have had it that way".

Bear to receive

You have to bear to receive whatever we say. We pay close attention to how you react to and receive what we say. We test you first to see if you can bear to hear what we say. Look at us, be calm and kind in your voice and have the courage to continue talking to us about things that are bad, painful or difficult. It's important that you don't get angry with us or disappointed by what we say. If you feel uneasy feelings inside, explain it to us, and maybe we can explain more.

We would like you to show emotion, as long as you tell us how you feel. It's nice if you tell us that it was good that we told you. That makes us sure that you can bear it.

Take us seriously

We have a lot of knowledge about our lives, you have to show us that you know this. It's important that you believe in what we say, and that you show right from the start that you take what we say completely seriously. When we notice that you do this with small things we say, it becomes easier to tell slightly bigger things.

It's nice if we are the ones who get to explain how it feels to us. Sometimes, for example, we can hear that what we are experiencing is a phase or something that's common when you are a child, or common during puberty. Then it can feel like you're making up explanations for us, and do not take our words seriously. Often we need to tell without you trying to find the reasons for us.

If you're concerned about us, it's helpful that you're honest about it and explain why you are concerned. We need to get honest information about everything about us. Then we know that it's our life that this is about. We also want information that you think might make us sad or angry.

Make an agreement before sharing information

When we are going to talk to you, it's very important that you tell us that you will not tell anything to others, unless you have agreed with us. Many of us have experienced adults talking together about things we tell them, both small and big things. For it to feel safe enough to talk, we need to know that you don't tell anyone else what we tell you. We need to know that before we say anything. It's nice if you remind us that it applies to both small and big things.

If you think that something we've said has to be shared, and we say no, it's important that you find out why we do not want to. There's always a reason for it. There may be several reasons why we do not want others to know what we share with you. We may be afraid of what teachers will say, if parents will be disappointed, angry or upset, or if other pupils will find out. Sometimes we can tell about situations that can get worse if others find out. Then it can become scary for us.

Include us when you write about us

When you write while we talk, it can feel awkward and make us tell less. That's because it can seem like you don't listen or care about what we say. Often we don't know why you do it, what you write or what you are going to do with what you write down. It feels scary not knowing and it makes us hold back. Even if we keep talking, we don't tell you things that are important for you to know.

Be open about the fact that you write records, why you write, what you write there and who will read it. In any case, you have to ask us what should and should not be included in the notes.

Ask us if we would like to write a small summary together at the end of the conversation. If we don't want that, we have to be able to read through what you have written. Or you can read it out loud to us if we prefer. Then together we can make sure that what is written is correct, helpful and that it feels safe to us. It's also important that what is written down about us is not shared with others without our knowledge and us having said that it is okay.

Make an agreement with us before others

When you are going to collaborate with other adults, it's important that you remember that it's us you're going to collaborate with most closely. In order for the solutions to be useful and safe for us, we have to be allowed to decide. If you initiate a collaboration with other adults, without having spoken to us first, it can quickly become very unsafe. Here is advice on what you can do to keep our trust, when you are going to collaborate with other adults or when there are going to be meetings that are about us.

If you think you should say something to our parents or talk to other professionals, you have to always first make an agreement with us on how to do it safely. We know our parents best and know what to say and how to say it to avoid upsetting them. If you tell someone else without our agreement, it can feel like you are talking behind our back. This applies to both something about us and something we've told you.

Therefore, together we have to make an agreement on exactly what, to whom, when, and in what way it should be said. Also when you are worried, or we tell you about something very painful, it is important that you work with us to find solutions. Then we know that we have control over what happens in our lives.



CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE
HAVE RIGHTS

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE RIGHTS

Children and young people between the ages of 13 and 21 have participated in this advice collection. Both those who are over and under the age of 18 use low-threshold services, and have rights in connection with the help they receive there.

Children under the age of 18 have many rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and young adults over the age of 18 have rights in the special laws and after human rights conventions. Therefore, this part will first outline which rights children under 18 have in low-threshold services. Below follows the rights young adults have. Many of the rights that apply to young adults in the special laws also apply to children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and children's procedural rights

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was made into Norwegian law in 2003, through Section 2 of the Human Rights Act. The Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to children under the age of 18. Several of the rights were also included in Section 104 of the Norwegian Constitution in 2014. Some of the rights are also included in various special laws. The Convention on the Rights of the Child must be used together with the special laws, and if the special laws say something different to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the provision in the Convention on the Rights of the Child shall prevail.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child gives children procedural rights. These are rights which describe how children should be met, in all actions and decisions that concern them, to be able to assess what is in the best interest of the child. The procedural rights are the consideration of the child's best interests, the right to information, the right to speak freely and the right to respect for one's privacy. These rights are now reflected in the new Child Welfare Act sections, 1-3 and 1-4, but apply to children in all systems, as a result of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the child's best interests must be a fundamental consideration in all actions and decisions that affect children. Actions and decisions affecting children in low-threshold services in the municipalities can, for example, be situations where adults share information from or about the child with parents, or where the adult believes there is a basis for making exceptions from the duty of confidentiality on the basis of, for example, duty to report or duty to provide information.

The child's opinion (the child's view) must be a central element in the assessment of the child's best interests. A prerequisite for the child to be able to express themselves freely and safely, is that the child is given enough information. An assessment of the child's best interests CANNOT be made without the child having first received sufficient and adapted information, and has been able to express their views freely. In addition, the child's right to privacy must be ensured, by the child receiving information about what information from the child can be used for, who can get access to this information, and that the child can express their views about the sharing of information.

The procedural rights apply to children both when meeting youth outreach services, talking-persons and public health nurses. The state has a duty to ensure that the employees in low-threshold services for children and young people know about children's procedural rights and know how to respect and ensure them in practice.

About the rights of young adults in low-threshold services

The Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to children under the age of 18. That is because children have a special right to care and help, because children have fewer resources to look after their own interests, and that children are particularly subjected to interference with their rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child does not apply to young adults over the age of 18, but their rights are secured in other ways, including in the special laws.

Both children and adults have the right to the state respecting and ensuring their rights. In low-threshold services, there are a number of rights that apply for young adults, including the right to necessary health care, participation in the design of health care, the right to a safe and good school environment and the right to privacy.

- All people have the right to privacy in accordance with ECHR art.8. Any interference with the right to privacy must be authorised by law and be necessary in a democratic society.
- If employees in low-threshold services are to do something that requires consent from the young person, there must be informed consent. This means consent is given without pressure or influence, and that the young person gets enough information and can express themselves freely about whether they want to consent.

When young adults meet **youth outreach services** they have the right to a holistic and coordinated care service provision, cf. the Health and Care Services Act § 4-1.

When meeting with a **talking-person** at school, the Education Act gives pupils in primary and secondary schools the right to a safe and good school environment, cf. section 9A-2. The school must ensure that the pupils involved are heard and that what is best for the pupils must be a fundamental consideration in the school's work, cf. section 9A-4, and pupils must be allowed to participate in the planning and implementation of work for a safe and good school environment, cf. section 9A-8.

When meeting with a **public health nurse**, young adults have the right to the necessary health care from the municipality, cf. the Patient and User Rights Act §§ 2-1a and 2-1b. Young adults have the right to participate, cf. section 3-1, and the right to adapted information, cf. Sections 3-2 and 3-4. Furthermore, protection against the sharing of information can be pointed out cf. § 3.6 and the general rule that health care must only be provided according to the patient's (informed) consent, cf. § 4-1.

The municipality has a duty to "promote the population's health, well-being, good social and environmental conditions and help to prevent psychological and somatic illness, injury or suffering, contribute to the equalisation of social health differences and help protect the population against factors that can have a negative impact on their health" cf. Section 4 of the Public Health Act. This applies to both children and young adults.

Children, as a group, have the right to participate in the design of low-threshold services

Children as a group also have the right to contribute to questions which affect children on a systemic level, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 12 and Section 104 of the Constitution. That implies that children do not only have the right to be heard in individual cases or affairs which concern them personally, but also at the system level in the preparation of plans, guidelines, legislative development and other national and regional work which affect children and young people, including the development of low-threshold services. The UN's children's committee states that children should be allowed to "participate" in such processes, which means that they must be included in the entire process, and there must be "an active exchange of views between children and adults" (general comment no. 12 para 12-13 and 122).

The best interests of the child according to Art. 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child implies that in actions which affect several children, what is in the best interests of this group of children, shall be a fundamental consideration. To find out what is best for the children, they must be given the opportunity to express their opinion and this must be taken into account in the decision. (UN Committee on Children, General Comment No. 12 paragraph 73). For the right to express themselves and be heard to be real, knowledge and experience are required, and advice from children and young people must be listened to, and their opinions must be given weight when something has to be decided, is decided and designed.

The children's committee's reasoning for why it is important to hear the children is among other things, that their views can contribute to better solutions because they have relevant experience (general comment no. 12 section section 12 and 27). When low-threshold services are to be designed, it is therefore very important that children's voices are heard, so that the services are designed in a way that is safe and helpful to them.

The same considerations apply to young adults who will also use the services – in order for the help to be helpful, the users must participate in the design of the service. The principle of user participation on system level is, among other things, legislated in the Healthcare Services Act, section 3-10 and section 35 of the Health Enterprises Act and 9A-8 of the Education Act.

NATIONAL SOLUTIONS



NATIONAL SOLUTIONS

Here is input for national authorities, based on advice from the children in this advice collection. The input is based on the advice of young people and is written by Pros in collaboration with political advisers in Changefactory. The input can contribute to Norway's initiatives and measures having good effect.

There is great agreement about low-threshold services

User organisations, Pros and politicians all speak clearly and enthusiastically about low-threshold mental health services for children and young people in the municipalities. There is broad agreement that all young people have to have access to this. The main responses from children are equally clear: available low-threshold services are essential.

Normality has to be preserved

The main answers from children are also super clear that the help must be easily available and as close as possible to where they live, not in a hospital. The help in the municipalities is often experienced as a lower threshold and therefore "normal".

There are also challenges associated with this. The specialisation can for example be a part of the moving load. An example that the focus can be shifted from normality to specialisation, is an extract from a draft of the guideline from the Norwegian Directorate of Health (Hdir) "together on children and young people's mental health":

The municipality's mental health service for children and young people should map out the challenges, and an assessment of the child's, the young person's or family's need for further treatment or follow-up. (...) Mapping out and assessment (...) of children/youths developmental needs, that include their health, education, emotional and behavioural development and social development. (hearing for the draft of the new national guidance note "together on children and young people's mental health, the Norwegian Directorate of Health, 2023)

If the focus on symptoms and disease is transferred to the municipalities, we risk that children trust in the municipal measures less. We therefore ask national authorities to take care of giving the municipalities further opportunities to meet children, with a strong focus on normality.

A place where young people can come has to be required by law

Today, low-threshold services, like houses where children can come and talk, are not required by law. As far as we know, there are no national frameworks for services like this. A clear main response from children and young people is that services like this must be available for all children and young people. As long as it is not legally required to have such services, access will vary around the country.

Without a national framework for these kinds of low-threshold services, the content in low-threshold services will quickly be different from municipality to municipality. To ensure that all children and young people who need the opportunity for these kinds of low-threshold services in the municipalities, we are asking for it to be required by law, and for a common national framework to be created.

Children and young people have to be included in the development of low-threshold services in each municipality

To ensure that the low-threshold services in each municipality will be safe and helpful for children and young people there, they as a group must be included in the development of the services. Many young people know something about what it takes to make it safe to go to a place like this. Many know how the adults have to be and how the place has to be, to be experienced as helpful. Each municipality has a responsibility to include young people in the municipality in these questions. The answers have to be used in development of the services.

This is crucial for the best possible quality in the services. At the same time, it is a right that all young people under the age of 18 have according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The children's committee has written this in a general comment, to Convention on the Rights of the Child:

When the interests of a large number of children are at stake, Government institutions must find ways to hear the views of a representative sample of children and give due consideration to their opinions when planning measures or making legislative decisions which directly or indirectly concern the group, in order to ensure that all categories of children are covered. (General Comment No. 14, paragraph 91).

The municipalities have an independent responsibility for safeguarding this right.

CHANGEFACTORY

KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

Why knowledge directly from children?

Children and young people have to feel that the school, kindergarten, support services, police and legal system are safe and useful for them. Children and young people all over Norway have experiences from meeting these systems and advice on how they can be the best possible. Authorities, professionals and students often lack this knowledge from children and young people, when frameworks and what constitutes good practice are to be determined, nationally and locally. Therefore, it must be brought in to a much greater extent and, together with other knowledge, be part of the knowledge base, in order to develop and ensure the quality of good systems for children and young people.

More than 10 years of collecting knowledge

For more than 10 years, Changefactory (CF) has systematically collected experiences and advice from children and young people about how they experience school, kindergarten, support services, the police and the legal system. In 2017, the Prime Minister opened Changefactory Knowledge Centre, to collect knowledge from children and young people about the public systems. As far as we know, there are few knowledge centres in Europe whose main purpose is to gather and disseminate knowledge directly from children and young people about the systems they are in. CF seeks collaboration with similar organisations.

Participatory and practice-oriented method

In order to collect, systematise and disseminate summarised experiences and advice from children and young people, a participatory and practice-oriented method is used. CF has called it the Changemethod. The Changemethod has been developed in close collaboration with children and young people. It greatly considers that children have the right to express their opinion, in ways that feel safe for them. The method consists of process descriptions and tools that help many diverse children and young people to participate. It's based closely on a participatory method used in action research, called Participatory Learning and Action (PLA).

Safety is most important

The experiences and advice are collected directly from children and young people in sessions or interviews. The sessions are organised with an emphasis on ensuring that they are experienced as safely as possible for the children and young people who participate. The adults who facilitate are, among other things, trained by children to meet children and young people with openness and human warmth. This is based on the main findings from children about what adults have to be like, in order for children to be able to tell honestly.

Experiences and advice are summarised

Experiences and advice from the sessions are documented in transcripts and other written and visual documentation. The data is summarised and systematised. No links are made to theory. Experiences and advice that are repeated by many children and young people in many places in the country, become the main answers. We call this knowledge directly from children.

Children and young people present

The knowledge from children is presented in reports, films, podcasts, books and online. Participants in the qualitative surveys can also be invited, as pros, in communication and professional development. The pros present knowledge directly from children to politicians, national authorities, professionals and students.

Selected publications



Angry on the outside, hurting on the inside

Advice from 101 children on how to meet children and young people who are angry and use violence



Not mean

Advice from 103 children on how conversations, interrogations and punishment can be done in safe and helpful ways



Talking kindly

Advice from 900 children on how public health nurses can make it safe for children to talk to them



Talking safely in school

Advice from 1962 children on what has to be done for children to be able to tell what's most important



Short way to friendships

Advice from 210 young people on how pupils and adults in school can meet children who are new in Norway in kind ways



Safe in class

Tools for a safe and good learning environment in grade 1.-10.



Ask us, and you'll find out

Advice from 201 children on how to decide extra help in ways that feel helpful

a place
where
everyone
is
welcome