

T A L K I N G  
K I N D L Y

900 children give advice to public health nurses





# KINDLY

## Dear health politicians and bureaucrats

Dear Minister of Health, Parliamentary politicians, politicians in large and small municipalities, health bureaucrats nationally and in the municipalities.

Dear you who decide in the education programmes, you in professional organisations and in other organisations. Here is new knowledge for you. We want you to understand better.

We want you to know repeated answers about what makes it safe and what makes it unsafe with public health nurses.

What must legislation and frameworks be like, so that it feels good for children to tell?

And how does it have to be done, so that collaboration with parents feels safe?

And what does it take for it to feel helpful to go to a public health nurse?

We hope that you politicians and bureaucrats take the answers from so many children seriously, so that the laws and guidelines are as safe as possible.

We also hope that you who decide in the education programmes and in organisations, take the knowledge we present here seriously.

Sincerely, Pros at Changefactory

# KINDLY

## Dear public health nurses

Dear public health nurses at schools.

Dear public health nurses at the youth health care centre.

Dear students who are going to become public health nurses.

Here you get new knowledge.

We are children and young people who have had different contact with public health nurses. Some of us have only visited you to get a vaccine, some have spoken to you many times and others may never have seen the public health nurse. In any case, we have important knowledge about how public health nurses should be in order for us to want to come to them to talk. We have important knowledge about how public health nurses make it safe enough for us to dare to tell the most important things, and what public health nurses should do when we've told you something important. We want YOU to be a person we can talk to. Therefore, we hope you will open your hearts and take the knowledge in this advice collection to heart.

Sincerely, Pros at Changefactory



## About the advice collection

The advice collection TALKING KINDLY was carried out in September 2019 - March 2020. Changefactory visited 16 schools in 9 cities and spoke to 692 children and young people aged 10-16. In addition, 208 young people aged 14-20 participated, from various schools and youth clubs. A total of 900 children and young people took part and there were roughly the same number of boys as girls. Most of the sessions were conducted in classes and in grades, with groups varying from 10 to 50 children. The rest of the meetings were carried out in smaller groups, where we went even more in depth. Out of consideration for privacy and the individual participant, the facilitator worked to ensure that the children's story did not become the focus of the sessions.

The focus of the advice collection was the talking to children-part of the role of public health nurses.

These questions were asked:

- > What do public health nurses have to be like?
- > What do public health nurses have to do and not do so that you can talk about what is important or difficult for you?
- > What do public health nurses have to do when collaborating with parents?
- > What do public health nurses have to do to ensure that it is safe for children in meetings?

The advice summarised in this advice collection is the advice most often mentioned by the 900 children in the advice collection. For advice to be included in the advice collection, it has to have been mentioned as an important thing in eight out of ten school classes.

In the last part of the advice collection, from page 40, where children give advice on how public health nurses should collaborate with other adults and services in meetings about children, only the young people who have experience with this have been specifically asked about this. The answers to this part have been given by 208 young people.

# THANK YOU

**A HUGE THANK YOU to you children who have shared experiences and given advice in this project. Norway needs this knowledge.**

**A big thank you to all the schools around Norway who have welcomed the advice collection and who thus have made it possible for their lovely, wise pupils to contribute.**

**You pupils know best how it should be safe to talk to public health nurses and what adults can do to ensure that you get useful and good help at school. You have contributed with wise and constructive solutions that adults would not have been able to find without you.**

**We hope and believe that your advice will be taken seriously and contribute to important changes in Norway.**

# THANK YOU FROM OUR HEARTS

The most important thing for us is that you are kind. We know you are kind when you use kind words. And when you say kind things and speak with kind voices.

You have to love children. We need to know that you are there for us. We notice when you comfort us, support us and cheer us on.

It is important that you really know how to listen, when we have talked, we can hear from the next question you ask, if you have paid attention. If you change the subject, it feels like you haven't listened well. Then we often say something less important afterwards.

**Only we know what our life feels like. Show emotions, then we know you listen to us with your heart. We feel that what we say has meaning and is something important.**

Show us that you know that we have a lot of knowledge about our lives. And that you believe that for us it feels the way we tell it.

Be completely honest about it with us, if you are worried about us. Explain that you do not want to share any information without us having agreed to it first. Only then can it be safe enough to tell.

In order for the solutions to be safe and helpful for us, you have to always make an agreement with us before you make an agreement with anyone else. If any information needs to be shared, we have to agree together on what, to whom and how it is to be said.

**Those of you who create the framework have to change the obligation to report and the obligation to avert, so that public health nurses can do their job, in the best interest of the child. No more children must experience adults reporting behind their backs. For all children in Norway, it has to feel safe to talk to you.**



1.

HOW PUBLIC  
HEALTH NURSES  
HAVE TO BE

Here we explain some of the characteristics that help determine whether you can become a safe person for children to talk to. We know that most of you have these qualities within you.

## Be kind

The most important thing for us is that you are kind adults. A kind adult is a warm and good person who shows with all their heart that they care about us. We know that you are kind when you tell us that we are valuable and that you wish us well. We feel it when you use kind words and say nice things about us. It is good if you speak in a kind voice that is gentle, warm and not too strict. You have to radiate kindness, and look at us with kind eyes and kind looks. It's nice to have warm smiles, that you smile like you mean it. Show with warm body language that you are happy to see us, feel free to say so too. We have to know that you are full of kindness and that it comes from deep within your hearts.

### **Quotes:**

Kind means smiling, giving a hug and having warm eyes. It means speaking warmly and gently, without a strict voice.

The public health nurse has to be kind, because otherwise I don't dare to say anything.

What type of words they use is very important. They have to speak kindly to us and about us.

I had a public health nurse who was kind. She showed it with the way she spoke to me. I realised that she cared and wanted to help me.

A kind public health nurse is someone who wishes you well and makes you feel safe. They say nice things about you.

They are kind when they see all children as kind, and know that children do not want to be mean.

Our public health nurse is very kind. It gives us a good feeling.

I notice that a person is kind if they really show that they care.

## Love and care about children

Public health nurses have to love children and young people. After all, we're the ones you'll be working with. We need to feel that you're there for us and that you care about us. We feel it when you comfort us, support us, cheer us on and do something to make us feel better. Then it will be easier to trust you and we can tell you what's important to us. You can show that you love us with a warm look or by asking if we want a hug. A hug or a stroke on the shoulder can provide warmth and comfort. It's nice if the love you have inside you also shows in your eyes. Then we feel warmth and kindness in your eyes.

### **Quotes:**

If they don't love children, no one will go there. Then there's no point.

It's important that they show love, speak to help, stroke the shoulder and make eye contact. Don't just give a tissue and move on.

Once I got a note home with nice words and some hearts. It was that little extra love when I opened up so much. It gave me confidence and I felt that someone really cared.

If the public health nurse shows that they care, there may be more people who go and talk to them. Then it won't be like talking to a wall.

Not everyone has big problems, but they have to care anyway.

Public health nurses have to show that they care, they have to smile and show interest. There are probably many pupils who don't want to or don't bother going to the public health nurse because they think they might not care.

If I'm sad, public health nurses should comfort and care for me. They need to show that they care.

Public health nurses have to like children. It's weird being a public health nurse if you don't like children.

Public health nurses have to show love and care about us. They can say it's okay and hold our hand.



your  
voice can  
show if  
you're  
kind





## Be able to listen

It's important to us that you are a person who can really listen. There are some things that make us sure that you are listening and that it's wise for you to remember. We see it in your face and eyes if you are paying attention. Show with your body language that you are listening. You do this when you lean a little forward and look at us with warm eyes. This makes us feel that we are taken seriously, and when we know this, it becomes safer to talk. It's nice if you pay attention to us instead of doing other things while we talk. If you are busy with other things, such as writing down what we say or looking at your phone, we may get unsure whether you are listening.

You have to not interrupt us when we are talking. Take the time to listen and let us tell you everything. This means that you often have to listen more than you speak. Be careful not to say "yes" or "mhm" or "tell me more" while we're talking. Sometimes it can feel like you're interrupting, or that you're just saying something you've been trained to say.

When we've finished talking, we'll hear it in your questions if you've been paying attention. Ask questions that show you've listened to what we have said. This means that what we've said determines what kind of questions come afterwards. If the question is about something else, or you change the subject too quickly, it can feel like you haven't listened well enough to what we've said. Then we might say something a little less important afterwards.

For it to be safe for us, we need to know that you listen when we tell. You have to listen to understand. And you have to understand to give us the right help. Therefore, you have to listen to what we say so that you can understand how life feels for us and how you can help.

### Quotes:

I notice that someone listens when they are not doing other things and asks follow-up questions about what we say.

You can see if the public health nurse is listening. They have to look you in the eye and show that they are listening. If they listen when I tell them something, I know they care.

When a person listens, they lean forward and try to catch what I'm saying. They care and let me talk.

Many adults say they listen, but we notice that they pay attention if they ask more about something they really want to understand.

If they bother to listen to what we have to say, we are able to say the important things.

To understand that they are listening, they have to look at me and not do anything else.

I notice if an adult is listening or not. If you change the subject or don't look at me, I know you're not listening.

Public health nurses have to listen. They have to pay attention to the small details. Then they can find out more and perhaps find the root of the problems.

## 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.

**Quotes:**

Public health nurses have to listen to our opinions and see it from our perspective. The public health nurse can say that she tries to understand why the person does what they do and ask questions about it.

Instead of saying "I know how you feel", instead ask "how does this feel for you?".

I tell them about mum, and then they say they understand. Then I ask if they've had a mother with cancer, but they haven't. How can they understand then?

We have one at school who understands. When he talks, he looks deep into our eyes and tries to understand us. It makes us happy again.

I need to feel understood, even if it can be difficult to do anything about it. You have to be understood in a way that makes you feel that you are heard and can get some help.

They have to not think that we're exactly like them. We're many years younger than them. Then they have to talk with us more to understand us.

I notice that an adult wants to understand me when they ask about something related to what I say.

If someone can't manage something in class, that it just doesn't work, then the adults have to ask if something is difficult for the pupil, instead of getting upset. They need to talk to you and try to understand.

They have to try to understand the situations we're in. Instead of just saying "it's okay" they have to ask us what's important.

## Be open and don't judge

It's important that public health nurses want to talk to everyone regardless of who we are or what we've done. We need to know that you are open to listening to us and that you haven't made up your mind about us in advance. If some of us have been diagnosed or someone else has said something bad about us, you don't need to focus on it. Rather, try to understand what lies behind what we say and do. It becomes unsafe for us if we feel that you think you know what we're like, before you have gotten to know us.

When we start talking, it's nice that you don't start assuming things about us, about who we are or how we feel. Only we know how our life feels, and it can quickly become very bad if you think you know how things feel for us.

When we've told something, it can quickly become bad if you start viewing us differently. Sometimes it can be scary to tell, because we are afraid of what you'll think of us afterwards. We notice that you view us differently if you change the way you speak, or if you stop speaking honestly to us.

If we come to you because of an argument, it's important that you listen to the different people involved. Do not think that something is the truth, it's experienced differently from different angles. Even if others have said bad things about us, it's wise to always ask us first. Then we can talk honestly about what it's about for us.

**Quotes:**

I notice if the person is prejudiced, and starts to assume things. They shouldn't start assuming things. It's bad and it's not certain that the things are true.

It's important that public health nurses are open to talking, and that we feel we can talk about all topics.

There are a lot of emotions that come when we're with a public health nurse. Sometimes we can be embarrassed and sick. All people are different, they just have to respect that.

If I have an opinion they can't be like "that opinion is wrong". Then it feels like the adults are angry or don't like me.

If the public health nurse judges us or says that what we're talking about is strange or doesn't make sense, it's easy to get upset and feel unsafe.

If you've done something that parents would scold you for, the public health nurse can listen instead.

## 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".

### Quotes:

Don't have a "stoneface". Because if the child says something that has been very painful and the public health nurse does not react, the child may think that it's not that serious after all.

If they sit completely still, it's hard to know if they care.

Show emotion when you talk to us. It's allowed to say or show that you get angry, sad or happy about what we say.

You don't have to start crying, but you can show that you care and want me to get better. It's nice to show emotions.

If the public health nurse is open and shows feelings, then I know she is safe. Then I know she really cares about me.

It's not so nice to be positive all the time. If we say something that's sad, then you have to also become a little sad so that we notice that you understand the situation.

If public health nurses show emotion and open up, it shows us that we shouldn't keep bad things inside.

## 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.

### Quotes:

Public health nurses have to be brave. When they hear something bad, they can say that it hurts to hear and that they get sad. They have to listen carefully.

Public health nurses have to bear hearing bad things. If we've opened up, it's very painful to be rejected.

They have to be able to handle all topics. They can speak up if they're unsure, and explain why they react the way they do.

They must not be put off by what we say. We may have big problems or small problems, but they have to bear it anyway.

Public health nurses have to listen to what we say and show that they can be there for us afterwards. It's important because then we can feel safer, and know that the public health nurse can bear it.

A public health nurse has to be good at dealing with difficult things





# 2.

WHAT PUBLIC  
HEALTH NURSES  
HAVE TO DO



Here is advice on what you should do so that it feels safe enough to come to talk to you. We hope that you can all do this, so that it will be safer for more people to talk.

## Give us info

We need to know why public health nurses are at the school and what you can help us with. Many of us believe that you are only here to give vaccines or band-aids. Not everyone knows that we can come to you to talk, or what we can talk to you about. It would be nice if you came to all the classrooms to tell us what you can help us with, when you're at school and where we can find you. Please give us concrete examples of what we can talk to you about. It's advisable that you use words that we understand. Remember to say that we can talk to you about both big and small things. Then it will be easier to come to you regardless of what we want to talk about. Some of us need to know that what we want to talk about is important enough to bring up with you.

It's safe for us if we know a little about who you are as a person. Please tell us your name and a little about yourself. Perhaps you're very fond of dogs, or have some interests that we also have. It feels good when you talk to us about ordinary things.

Even before we come to you, it's important that we know that things we say will not be passed on without an agreement with us first. You have to be sure that all the pupils at the school know this. It may determine whether we want to talk to you at all. Explain carefully and honestly what confidentiality means, and the exceptions, so that we understand what will happen to what we say.

### Quotes:

It's important that they give information to everyone in the class about who they are and what we can talk to them about. I thought the public health nurse was someone who came in once a year to give injections.

If it becomes clear that we can go there for anything, not just the very difficult and big things, then maybe more will come.

I thought you had to have big problems to talk to a public health nurse. When they introduce themselves, they say that if you're struggling or having problems, come to me. I wouldn't dare to talk about heartbreak.

Public health nurses could have a meeting with each class or grade about why they are here, what they help with and when they are here. We need information. It's good if they say that they exist. I don't know who the public health nurse is. There should be more info.

I need to get info, I didn't really know if there was a public health nurse at the school here.

Public health nurses have to go to the classes and inform them that it's okay to talk about things. Don't just say where the office is, but also make us feel safe. It's important with confidentiality, that they don't say anything to someone else. I think that's why a lot of people don't go there.

If I know they are keeping it secret I can be a little more open. I have to be able to trust them.

Confidentiality has to be said right away for security. They have to tell me what the duty of confidentiality applies to, and what it does not. So I know where it ends up, if I say something.

## Be where we are

Sometimes it can be difficult to plan exactly when we need someone to talk to. Other times it may take time to muster up enough courage to come to you. Then it would be nice if you are available at school so that we can feel a little more safe about who you are. When we see you often, it can feel less scary to go to you to talk. It would be nice if you were more with us where we are, in the classrooms, in the schoolyard and in the corridors. Then we can have the opportunity to get to know you a little, and you can see more of how we are doing at school.

It may be a good idea to invite all the pupils to conversations so that we can get to know you better. If we've talked to you before, it might be less scary to come to you when we really need to.

**Quotes:**

It's scary to have to contact an adult we don't meet that often. It becomes less scary if we see the person more.

It's about building trust. We are young people, we are already a bit closed off and don't always have complete control either. Sometimes we need to talk to people who are not friends or family. There is an awful lot going on and a lot that can be difficult to talk about, so it's important that the person is where we are.

Public health nurses should spend time getting to know the pupils outside the office. Walk around a bit and be present. Then it will be much safer.

Public health nurses should be there more often. It's difficult to get time with her. And once she's there, she's busy all the time. I'm always just met by a note on the door when I go there.

Public health nurses are both good and bad. It's bad that she is there so little and then you don't get help. When the public health nurse is there, I feel that I can always come and talk to her. She listens and tries to help you, and does everything she can to help.

Maybe it's good to have more mandatory meetings because I haven't been there for two years. It can be a little difficult to come and talk to a stranger about your problems.

Public health nurses have to try to contact us. For example, setting up a conversation with all of us.

If I was a public health nurse, I would walk a little more around the corridors and during breaks, to get to know the pupils. It doesn't have to be that difficult.

It's not always easy to talk to someone you don't know. Then it helps if the public health nurse is visible and talks to the pupils.

It takes a lot to go to the public health nurse, so we can lose trust if the office is closed.

## Smile and say hello

It's nice if you're happy when we see you in the hallway or schoolyard. We see that you're happy when you look at us with warm eyes and smile. When you smile, you send out good vibes. It makes it feel safer to come to you. If you don't smile, you can quickly seem stern or angry. Then we can become scared or unsure whether you are interested or like us. Feel free to say "hello" in a kind voice when you see us in the hallways. A happy person feels safer to talk to.

Remember that you have to always smile and greet everyone, regardless of whether you know us or not. Then it won't be so obvious who has talked with you. It's not certain that we want everyone to know.

**Quotes:**

A public health nurse has to be smiling and easy to talk to. It's nice when she or he smiles and says hello in the hallways.

I think that one of the most important things about a public health nurse is that the person is cheerful and positive. Then I want to talk to them. When I meet angry people, I just have to leave.

They have to have a big smile so we know they like us.

If those who come to the public health nurse are a little shy, the public health nurse can make them feel more safe if they are smiling and safe.

They have to not be angry or irritated, then we don't dare to speak.

Our public health nurse always has a smile on her face and is helpful.



you have  
to build  
trust



# WHEN WE COME TO YOU TO TALK

## Get to know us a little

It's safe for us if you tell us a little about yourself before we start talking. It doesn't have to be a lot, but it's nice to know a little. It feels much safer to talk to someone you know a little more about, someone who is a little more like a friend. It may also be a good idea to talk about what we like, or what we like to do in our free time, so that everything doesn't seem so serious. Then the conversation often gets a little easier, and it can become more natural to talk about slightly more serious things.

Sometimes it's scary or difficult to tell about bad things that have happened. Then it helps if you share a bit from your own life and perhaps tell about something that you've experienced. When you are honest with us, it's easier to be honest with you as well.

### **Quotes:**

We think it's important that public health nurses also talk about their interests, because it is easier to get into the conversation and talk about what is difficult. Then we get to know them a little more and trust them more.

It's a good idea to talk about small things first, for example about friends, family and school, until we get to the topic that is the problem.

It gives us a sense of safety to get to know each other. We need to know a little more than just names, we would like to know what they like.

You and the public health nurse have to be able to have normal conversations without anything being wrong. If you've talked about something that's somewhat common, it may be easier to talk about something that's difficult.

They have to spend time finding out what the pupils are interested in. Trust is created when you get to know each other.

I don't trust public health nurses that much because I'm not very excited about sharing what I've been through with someone I've just met.

It's important that the public health nurse is like a friend in a way, so that you can feel that safety.

If they ask a question about something personal, they have to also answer back. If they are honest with you, you will also be able to be honest with them.

If we know the person better, we probably trust them more.

## 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.

### **Quotes:**

They must not think that we don't know what we're talking about because we are children.

The adults have to take what we say seriously, and show it clearly. Don't say it's hormones and puberty or a phase. They have to react with emotion and try to understand.

Public health nurses have to be good at taking children seriously. They have to believe in the pupils. Then it's easier to have a conversation with them. When you feel that you are heard, you know that they understand you. Then you feel safe.

Public health nurses have to look at us in the same way, not as little children but as someone our age.



What I said was not taken seriously by the public health nurse. That was the reason why I could not talk safely.

It would have been easier if they had brought me along from the start and asked what was important to me.

It's important that the adult is honest and speaks the truth. If I have herpes, they can't say that's okay, it's not okay. They have to say the right treatment, take me seriously.

It's important that they listen to what the pupil says. Don't say it's not serious enough or downplay feelings or thoughts.

## 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.

### Quotes:

If you tell it to others, I could have just told everyone else myself. But I chose you.

The public health nurse has to maintain confidentiality when I come to tell. They cannot tell it to teachers, parents, colleagues, or other pupils without making an agreement with me.

It's important to maintain confidentiality, that they do not share anything behind our backs. We're afraid that they will share things. I think that's why a lot of people don't go there.

I don't feel I can speak there, if the public health nurse spreads what I say around. Then I feel like I'm being tricked. If the public health nurse says she won't say it, and she does, I get mad and sad.

There can be differences in what public health nurses and pupils think, and that can become a big problem. That's why we always have to discuss it first, before anything will be shared.

They must not share what we are talking about with others, without our permission.

I might test the public health nurse to see what I can say. Then I find out what it takes for them to share information.

If I've had a bad day, I don't want the public health nurse to tell others. If she does, I don't trust her anymore, then I close up.

If the public health nurse tells others, I may be bullied or teased. Or maybe the problems will get bigger, maybe one of the people who started the problem will find out.

Just ask us what we are comfortable with being shared. No matter who they want to share it with. It's very important that they ask me first, for me to trust them.

## 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.

don't  
tell  
others



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.

### **Quotes:**

When she sits and writes all the time, it seems as if she is not listening. We want her attention.

It's important that what they write is anonymous. We need to know what they write, because everything they write down they can share, and that's not okay for us. We only tell the public health nurse. If we say something embarrassing and it's shared, we get hurt.

There are often interpretations in what they write. When they ask if they have understood this correctly, it's sometimes difficult to say no. It will be safer if we can sit next to them and read what is written.

Children want to have privacy, the information we give has to remain in the conversation. When you talk to the public health nurse, she should not write down everything you say. Don't look down, she has to focus on us. If they lose the sheet or someone hacks into the data, someone can find out what you have said. It's important because no one knows if, let's say, you have a grandfather from another country, and then you get beaten by him.

When the public health nurse writes, it becomes different, it becomes difficult to speak freely. You become unsure.

I feel uncertain about what they will do with what they write down.

## **Give time and patience**

It's good if you are calm in your voice and body when you talk to us. If you are restless in your body language, or stressed in your voice, we can feel that you are in a rush, and wonder if you are really interested. This makes us uncertain about continuing to tell.

It can take time before we start talking about what's in our hearts. We often need to meet you several times. It's important that you are patient and try to give us the time we need.

When we start to tell, it takes time before we've told everything. That's why it's nice if you can let us decide the pace. If you are in a hurry, it can feel like we are being interrupted. It hurts when we talk about something that is important to us. We may feel rejected and be afraid that we've said something wrong. Therefore, it's wise that you explain to us why we have to stop, so that we don't think it's about us or something we've said. Say that you want to talk more with us and ask if we should set up a new appointment.

### **Quotes:**

Public health nurses have to respect it if I take a long time to say something.

Adults should have patience. If we try to explain but can't quite get it right, then they have to take it slow and not push.

Don't rush what comes up in the conversations. If you don't rush, it feels like you care more.

They have to be calm so it doesn't stress the children who are there. If you stress, the child can become stressed and become afraid.

Don't push too much, let us tell at our pace, let us say everything.

If I'm not ready to talk, it can be uncomfortable and heavy. Maybe ask if we can set up another conversation so that we have time to get to know each other a bit first.

Public health nurses cannot just say a solution and then the problem is solved. It has to be taken step by step, they have to build up trust.

It's important that we get the time we need. That you don't have to leave until you've finished talking about what you need help with. Public health nurses have to hear the whole story and hear how it started.

## Make it cosy

In order to feel safe, it's important to talk somewhere that feels cosy to us. When the room has good furniture, nice colours and good places to sit, it feels much safer to be there. If we are stressed, bored or feel unsafe, it feels nice and safe to come to a place where we feel welcome. It might be a good idea to have something good to eat or drink. It can help lighten the mood and make it easier to talk.

### Quotes:

It can be a bit stressful to sit face to face. There can be a sofa, warm colours so that you feel a little better and are able to talk.

It's important that they are kind, give sweets and have a good time there. Then we dare to speak if we have secrets. There may be something we need to say. For example, that things are not going well at home.

It should be cosy in the room, then you feel that you can talk about everything. You can have some biscuits, juice or fruit to calm the nerves.

Have some candy, then you feel a little more safe.

If there is food there, we're welcomed a little better. Then it doesn't feel like an interrogation, more like a conversation.

We would like them to serve something good. After all, you serve food to those you care about, then it becomes safer.

Make the conversation pleasant by perhaps giving us something good, and caring and showing understanding.

It's kind of reassuring in a way to get something when you're there.

## 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.

### Quotes:

Public health nurses are there to help us. Therefore they have to talk to us about what we need, instead of going to teachers and parents. Only we know what we need.

When the public health nurse has to collaborate with the teachers or contact the parents, she has to show respect for us and listen to us. It's important to listen to children because we have many good suggestions.

If we're having a really hard time, they always have to talk to us.

Many times adults don't listen to what we have to say. That's bad. Then they might get things wrong and everything has to be done over again.

They collaborated more with my mother than with me. This meant that I did not get the help I wanted and needed.

If they are more concerned with "solving" the problem than understanding my situation, then we end up with meaningless advice. It's important that they let me talk enough about what I want and think is wise before they do anything.

The adults have to dare to stay calm and collaborate with us when we tell them about something bad.



ask  
me  
what  
is  
important





## Give us enough information before meetings

When there's going to be a meeting that is about us, where several adults will participate, we need to feel that we are the main character in the meeting. We have to be involved from the very beginning. It's wise to ask us whether we want to participate, well in advance of the meeting. It makes it safe when you tell us who will be in the meeting, so that we are prepared for it. Explain to us that we are allowed to bring a person we feel safe with if we wish, and that it's a person of our own choosing.

It's not certain that we have participated in a meeting like this before. Therefore, it's good if you explain why the meeting will take place and what it will be about. What is decided at the meeting can have a great impact on our lives, and it's important that you talk to us about it. We need to know this in order to decide whether we want to be there or not.

Tell us how important it is that we are at the meeting. We have to know that you really need our description of our situation, what we think about what is to be decided and what we think about the future. We need to feel that you really care about us and that you want us to be well. Show this with all of yourself, so that we know that this is why you want us to attend the meeting.

### Quotes:

They have to explain to us why it's important that we attend the meeting.

We need to know what measures are to be taken, and what that means. If we don't know that, it becomes unsafe. If we get to know things, it builds trust.

They need to make it clear that they want us there because they want to listen to what we have to say. Make us feel that we're going to be heard.

I didn't really get any information about what they could help me with. It would be smart if I was told, then it becomes much safer.

They can find out if there is anyone the pupil is uncomfortable with. Then it's good if you find out first and can talk to the person concerned. You find out together with the pupil what needs to be done.

We need to know why the meeting will be held and what will be decided. Then we'll be more keen to attend.

It's important that we feel that we are the main character in our lives. The public health nurse has to tell us this. We need to know that it's important that we attend the meeting, and why.

There are times when I am informed on the same day about meetings, and then I don't know what it's about. Just know that it's mandatory. Don't know who's coming either. Suddenly a stranger is sitting in the meeting. I wish I could meet them beforehand, it doesn't always feel safe to bring things up when there are strangers in meetings.

Sometimes mum has received so much more information than me that I would be "clueless" if mum didn't take the time to tell me. I've hardly been part of the collaboration.

## Make the meetings safe

We might think it sounds scary to be part of the meeting. Then you have to ask us what's needed so that it can feel safe enough to participate. Remind us how important it is that we are involved, and that our opinions are needed for the solution to be the best possible for us. Try to find out why we don't want to be part of the meeting, and ask what makes us feel unsafe. Maybe we can solve it together.

Children have the right to bring someone they feel safe with into the meeting. This could be the public health nurse, a teacher, a school social worker or another adult. This person's task is to make it safer for us to be in the meeting. They can ask us questions when needed, check how we feel in the meeting and tell some of the other adults if something is being done in an unsafe way. It might be a good idea to have a sign that we can use if something happens that doesn't feel right. Then we can feel safe that our opinion will be brought forward at the meeting. Having a person you feel safe with there, can make a meeting with many adults possible to participate in.

When we're going to be in meetings, it's important that we get to talk to the person who will be leading the meeting in advance. We need to talk about what we think is important for the meeting to be about, and how the meeting has to be for it to feel safe to be there. There may be something we don't want mentioned, or something we really need to talk about in the meeting. It may also be a good idea to talk together about what can be done if we become uncertain or sad during the meeting. It would be nice if we could have some sort of plan for this.

**Quotes:**

Responsibility group meetings can be very large and scary. There has to be someone there who can see when we become unsafe. Talk to us properly before the meeting.

I have to have someone I feel safe with, with me when I go to meetings. Someone who knows what I think and mean about what is being talked about. It is scary with many people in the meeting. Maybe I haven't met all of them before.

Be honest about what you are going to talk about and ask what we want to talk about. We should be allowed to take part in planning the meeting and deciding what is important to talk about in the meeting.

Sometimes they just want you in the meeting, but you still have nothing to say there. Then they can say that you were actually there, but you have no influence on what happens.

It's important to find out what the meeting is about in advance, so that there are no surprises.

If it's a topic that is very personal, you may not want the teachers to be involved.

It's nice if the adults introduce themselves and say why they are there. They have to speak in words that we understand, so we are included. Encourage and give feedback when we share about ourselves.

## Always include our voice in meetings

If we are not going to be in the meeting, the person we have chosen as our safe person, has to be able to be there and bring up what we really wanted to say in the meeting. Whether you have been chosen or not, make sure we have one. In the meeting itself, this person can watch out for how we are talked about and what's important to us that you talk about. Show that you are on our side and stand up for us and our opinions. It's very important that our voice is truly heard when things are going to be decided.

If we do not want to be in a meeting, it's good if you ask again next time. Maybe we'll change our minds. Don't give up on getting us involved. In any case, our voices have to be in the meeting and be truly heard. If you are unsure of what we would think about something that is mentioned in the meeting, it's important that you do not decide anything without checking with us. If adults decide on solutions without our agreement, things can easily go wrong.

**Quotes:**

If I can't say it myself, then the person I feel safe with has to ask if they can help me say it.

If I am not allowed to join the meeting, they can ask me if there is something I want to be said or not said at the meeting. But I don't really understand why they should have a meeting without the person it's about.

My decisions were placed first, and the adults involved only wanted to talk to me.

We have to agree on what will be said at the meeting and why we say it. And the public health nurse has to be on my side.

They have to stop the meeting when the child needs it. The summary of the meeting has to be confirmed by the child when the meeting is finished.

If the child does not want to be in the meeting, the child's opinion has to be expressed through a person that the child has chosen themselves.

I needed her to talk to me. Not that the adults got together and figured out how to fix me.







# 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.



talk  
kindly  
with  
us

I can handle  
honesty

