

**Daisy Chain Playgroup Document regarding child checks**

**Hyperlinks are highlighted in Red**

**Emphasis points in Maroon**

**Titles and subtitles in Green**

**The last step, step 12 is not itemised with subheadings as it is devoted to violence against adults.**

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# **Child check**

The child check is part of step 1 of the reporting code for domestic violence and child abuse. The child check applies to all professionals who work with adult clients. The goal is to identify children in high-risk situations as early as possible and to initiate good help. But when do you carry out the child check and how do you do it?

## **What is the child check?**

The child check is appropriate if an adult or adolescent client is in a (medical) situation that can cause minor children (serious) harm. The child check means that you check with certain groups of adults whether they take care of underage children and whether children grow up safely there. Consider, for example, clients with serious psychological problems, drug or alcohol addiction or with a violent partner. Also, check with these groups of clients whether they are pregnant. And with adolescent clients with such problems, you check whether they have minor brothers or sisters with whom they live in a house.

In the case of a 'positive child check', follow the [**steps of the reporting code**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/themas/meldcode/). Is there no reason to worry? Then you close and note that in the file.

## **Professionals who work with adults**

Initially, the child check is intended for professionals who work with adult clients. They have a responsibility and an opportunity to identify child abuse at an early stage. Even if you don't see the children or don't see anything about the children, you can worry about their (home) situation.

## **Professionals who work with children**

In addition, the child check applies to professionals who work with children, such as in youth health care or in a children's ward. Here too, 'parent signals' can lead to concerns about children.

## **Child check step-by-step plan**

The first step is to map signals, as prescribed by the reporting code. In this case: parental signals that may pose a risk to minor children. In a conversation with your client, you find out to what extent the children he or she cares for suffer from their problems. The purpose of this conversation is that you assess whether it is necessary to take further steps (or have them taken) because the parent's situation is or may be harmful to the children.

## **Signs of parental problems**

You may identify problems in an adult client that may pose a risk to growing children. For example, your client is dealing with partner violence, there is an imminent eviction, your client has a firearm in his or her possession, and your client is chronically depressed or is addicted to alcohol or drugs.

## **Child check**

If you pick up signals of parental problems in a client, you check whether minor children are living with him or her. These can be their children, but also, for example, children of a (new) partner. In addition, it may be that your client regularly stays somewhere where there are minor children, for example of a family member that your client often visits. In the case of pregnant women and adolescents, you check whether other minor children are living with them.

## **Steps for an honest answer**

If the client answers your questions honestly and is aware of the real risks for the children, you take the following steps:

* Check whether the client has convincingly allayed your concerns about the children.
* When in doubt, ask a colleague or Safe Home to think along. If necessary, use professional help or support from the client's network.
* If your concerns persist, explain to your client that you are calling in Safe Home for an investigation into the children's situation. Tell them that the family may receive (extra) help.

## **Steps in case of a different answer**

If your client avoids your questions, if you receive insufficient or incorrect information or if your client is not aware of the risks for the children, act as follows:

* Find out if there are social workers involved in the family who can help assess the children's situation.
* If this is not the case, explain to your client that you are going to follow the reporting code and ask Safe Home for advice. Tell them that this can lead to an investigation into the situation of the children and, if necessary, to (extra) help.

***Please note: the child check does not always lead to you going through all five steps of the reporting code. Look up exactly what your tasks and responsibilities are in your organization's reporting code.***

**Also read:**[**Augeo Magazine - How to do the child check**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/nl/magazine/7731/755595/zo_voer_je_de_kindchek_uit.html)

## **What questions of the child check could you ask?**

Examples of general questions you ask with the child check:

* Do underage children live in your house (all week)?
* Do you share the care for them with an adult? How is the care divided?
* Where do the children stay during the day?

Questions about the care for children in the client's current situation:

* Are you able to give your children attention, time and care?
* How do you adequately supervise your (small) children?
* Who does the practical matters, such as Taking children to school, cooking and washing?

***With all these questions, you must ask further questions to get a concrete picture of the situation.***

## **What if you only have short contact with parents?**

If you see your clients once or only briefly, a conversation about possible risks to children is not always possible. For example, if you work in the emergency room of a hospital or in the ambulance service. Even then you can do something for the children if you meet a client with the aforementioned problems. Ask if your client takes care of minor children. If so, explain your concerns to your client. Then ask Safe Home for advice. Sometimes it is possible to call in professional help or support from your network. Therefore, look for cooperation with care providers who are already in contact with your client and the family.

Do not transfer responsibility for your client until someone else takes on the help. Is it impossible to take these steps? Then tell your client that you are making a report to Safe Home. Check your organisation's reporting code to see exactly what tasks and responsibilities you have.

Always take your concerns about the children's situation seriously and do something about it.

## **Parents with problems**

You perform the child check if problems of your adult client could seriously threaten the health, well-being or safety of minor children.

## **Parent characteristics**

Parental characteristics are the most important predictors (for the development) of child abuse. For example, it appears that 82% of parents who have abused their child have a traumatic history or childhood themselves; 21% of them have been treated by a psychiatrist. The risk of child abuse is also greater if parents are constantly in conflict with each other or have psychological and addiction problems.

Because certain characteristics of parents lead to a higher risk of child abuse, the government expanded the Mandatory Reporting Code Act in 2013 to include the child check. This was partly because of the good results that Medical Centre Haaglanden and Safe Home Haaglanden achieved with their parent protocol. Research showed that the suspicions of child abuse, expressed by professionals based on parental signals, were confirmed by Safe Home in 90% of the cases.

**See also:**[**Augeo Magazine; The child check - Facts and figures**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/nl/magazine/7731/755488/cover.html)

## **With whom do you use the child check?**

The child check is applied to adults and adolescents who:

✔ have severe and/or acute psychological problems, such as severe depression or mania, psychosis or dissociation;
✔ serious and/or acute suicidal thoughts and/or behaviour;
✔ exhibit structurally aggressive behaviour;
✔ (suspected) victims of domestic violence;
✔ are severely addicted to alcohol, drugs or other substances;
✔ are in a crisis situation, such as problematic debts or (imminent) eviction;
✔ have severe chronic physical problems;
✔ are mentally disabled;
✔ fear of honour violence;
✔ are extremely unhygienic, unsafe or very poorly housed.

***Please note:
if a parent has problems, this does not mean that he or she cannot raise a child properly. For example, a depressed mother may have arranged for a permanent babysitter for the children.***

## **Domestic violence and child abuse reporting code**

The reporting code helps you as a professional to act carefully in the event of a suspicion of child abuse or domestic violence. Five steps indicate what to do if you suspect that a child is in trouble at home.

## **Mandatory Reporting Code Act**

The Mandatory Reporting Code for Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Act has been in force since 2013. This law means that all organizations that work with children and adults must have a reporting code and enable employees to work with it. The purpose of the reporting code is to help professionals act earlier and better if they suspect that a family member is being abused, neglected or sexually abused at home. We know from research that professionals who work with a reporting code take steps three times more often and faster than professionals who do not use a reporting code. These steps do not necessarily lead to a notification.

## **Basic model reporting code**

The government has drawn up the basic model reporting code for domestic violence and child abuse. Sectors and branches have translated this example to their supporters. Subsequently, institutions and organisations in turn translate this into their working practice: they describe who takes which steps in the event of a suspicion of child abuse or domestic violence. Each reporting code includes the same 5 steps as included in the basic model. This facilitates collaboration between professionals and organisations.

## **Right to report**

The reporting code is emphatically not a reporting obligation. Organisations are obliged to have a reporting code, and professionals are obliged to act according to the steps of the reporting code, but going through it does not have to lead to a report.

The Reporting Code Act does state that professionals have the right to report to Safe Home. Even if family members do not give permission for this. The right to report means that professionals may pass on the personal data of adults and children to Safe Home so that they can start an investigation into the family situation. In addition, professionals may provide information if Safe Home asks for it because of the investigation.

# **Step-by-step plan for reporting code**

## **Do you suspect domestic violence or child abuse?**

What should you do with the reporting code and suspicions of domestic violence or child abuse? Use the report code step-by-step plan. Based on 5 steps, you as a professional determine whether you need to report to Safe Home and whether sufficient help can be deployed.

### **STEP 1: Map signals**

Map out signals that confirm or disprove your concern. Record signals and follow-up steps objectively and factually in the file. If necessary, carry out [**the child check**](https://www.augeo.nl/kindcheck)**.**

### **STEP 2: Consult with an expert colleague or Safe Home**

Consult with an expert colleague to interpret signals. If necessary, consult Safe Home or a forensic doctor. In the event of honour-related violence, forced marriage or female circumcision, contact Safe Home immediately.

### **STEP 3: Talk to parents and the child**

Discuss your concerns as soon as possible with the child's parents/guardians and the child itself. Only if your safety or that of the child can be endangered by a conversation can this be waived.

### **STEP 4: Weigh the violence**

Assess the nature and seriousness of the situation based on signals, consultation with a colleague and conversations with parents and the child. If in doubt, ask Safe Home for advice. If there is a real risk of damage: report.

### **STEP 5: Decide: Is reporting necessary? Is assistance necessary?**

If you can protect the child sufficiently, offer or organize the necessary help. If the situation is acutely or structurally unsafe, you report it to Safe Home and decide together what help you can organise yourself.

## **Reporting code information package**

Would you like to know more about the reporting code? Request a free information pack. With various tips, such as How do you talk to parents or children? How do you recognize or identify child abuse? What is typical counsellor language? **REQUESTED BY THE TEAM LEADER AND AVAILABLE**

## **Wiser with the reporting code**

The Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Reporting Code is a step-by-step plan intended to help professionals act earlier and better if they suspect child abuse or domestic violence. Working with the reporting code is sometimes quite difficult and must be done carefully. Under the name 'Wijzer met de meldcode' you will find a wealth of information in the form of many practical tips from professionals, information, exercises, webinar compilations, a theme magazine and a practical conversation guide with recognizable cases.

##### **Tips from practice**

Professionals, attention officers or organisations regularly experience obstacles in working with the reporting code. How do others go about it? What solutions are there? What works and how? 'Wiser with the reporting code' highlights **12** issues with many useful tips and recommendations based on experiences from professionals from various sectors.

### **1)Knowledge of the reporting code**

In the ideal situation... everyone who is obliged to work with the reporting code knows all the ins and outs of it. They know exactly what should and should not be done. And why that reporting code is important. But in practice, there are many uncertainties or professionals run into obstacles. What does work? What tips, experiences and good examples are there? We asked professionals from all kinds of sectors. Learn from their experiences in the theme of 'knowledge of the reporting code'.

**Knowing the reporting code and knowing what it can do for you. That goes beyond taking a course once. These tips are based on the practical experiences of professionals and will help you further.**

##### **6 tips for professionals**

##### **1. Be aware that domestic violence is a common problem**

If you don't know that children, adults and the elderly can all be victims, perpetrators or witnesses of violence or neglect by another family member, you can't recognize it either. You must be first of all aware that domestic violence is (common) and can have serious consequences for everyone involved**.**[**View 'factsheet domestic violence'**](https://www.augeo.nl/-/media/Files/Diversen/Factsheet-huiselijk-geweld-Movisie.ashx) for more facts and figures about domestic violence.

##### **2. Discuss domestic violence and the reporting code**

Professionals sometimes find it difficult to talk to colleagues about domestic violence. It helps if it is a regularly recurring topic of conversation.

'I often thought other colleagues don't talk about it either, maybe it doesn't happen here. Now that we talk about it more often, it turns out that we all have worries and doubts from time to time.'

Put it on the agenda of a team meeting yourself and ask [**your organization's attention officer**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/kennis-van-de-meldcode/aandachtsfunctionaris/) to do the same. This makes it a normal topic of conversation. It will also be easier to work according to the steps of the reporting code.

##### **3. Know the steps of the reporting code**

You don't have to know them by heart. But you do need to know where you can find your organisation's reporting code and the corresponding step-by-step plan. For example, you can download an app on your phone, such as the [**one from VWS**](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.guppiesinthedark.apps.vws&hl=nl&gl=US&pli=1)**.** On our website, you will find an overview of the [**reporting code step-by-step plan**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/themas/meldcode/). Do you want to test whether you are sufficiently aware of the reporting code? [**Take the reporting code quiz**](https://meldcodequiz.nl/)**.**

##### **4. Use the reporting code as a tool**

Professionals are sometimes reluctant to start the reporting code because they think they will have to report it.

'When people hear the word reporting code, they quickly think of reporting, but then you skip a lot of steps. It would be better to talk about a help code or a security code.'

The purpose of the reporting code is to act step by step in the event of signs that may indicate domestic violence. It is a tool to carefully and together with the family to look at what may be going on and what help may be needed to improve their situation. Realize that it is not always necessary to report to Safe Home. Your concerns may have been unjustified, or the family may be referred to voluntary assistance, for example. After each step, you may conclude that there is no longer any reason to continue going through the reporting code.

NA. It is important to state in the file that you have closed the reporting code and explain why you have come to that conclusion. More information about file management can be found in theme 9 'Fact or opinion' of [**Wijzer met de meldcode**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/)**.**

##### **5. Make sure your legal knowledge is up to date**

Many professionals are afraid of the legal consequences that following the reporting code can have. That is why you must know what you are allowed and required to do according to the Reporting Code Act. An important starting point is that you always involve the family as early as possible in the steps you want to take. And that you involve colleagues and Safe Home in this. It can always happen that a complaint is filed against you. The chance of this is smaller and you are stronger if you: act carefully and you can justify your actions well and record them well.

In the 'Fact or opinion' and 'Sharing information' sections of [**Wijzer met de meldcode**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/) you will find more tips on what you can and must do when working with the meldcode.

##### **6. Know how Safe Home Works**

'We can also offer tailor-made solutions because it doesn't have to be just one consultation. We can support and keep up the pace of the caller.'
Safe Home Employee

At Safe Home, you can not only make a report but also ask for advice about signals or conversations, for example. To increase awareness of the reporting code and domestic violence, you must know what to expect from Safe Home. [**This animation**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEBSIWWxY1U)gives a good example of how they work.

**An important task of the attention officer is to put and keep the reporting code on the agenda at all levels of the organisation.**

##### **5 tips for an attention officer**

##### **1. Ensure support from the board and colleagues**

In order to properly implement the reporting code, it is important that it is supported by everyone in the organisation.

'As a starting attention officer, you first need support and substantiation from external sources. For example, from the Reporting Code Act, from the professional association or figures: how often does domestic violence occur in your sector? That gives you a first foot in the door.'

To convince the management of your organisation of the importance of the reporting code, emphasise the mandatory nature of the reporting code: after all, every organisation is obliged to have a reporting code and to enable employees to work with it.

Then call-in internal helpers. If certain groups within your organisation are more difficult to reach, look for ambassadors who do come into that group.

##### **2. Submit a wish list to the board**

Hand in a wish list to the board and motivate why you need time and space to do your job well as an attention officer.

'You have to enforce that. Make it clear how much time it will take you to get support, make that very concrete. Show how much time you have spent on it and how much time colleagues have spent on it and after six months show how many hours it has cost you and what you have done in them.'

Even after that, you need time and space to follow training and keep the reporting code permanently on the agenda. There must also be time available for your colleagues to get and keep their knowledge up to date. Make that clear too.

##### **3. Ensure continuous attention**

Professionals indicate that if the subject is not always brought to their attention, they can forget that they have to work according to the reporting code. In the delusion of the day, it fades into the background and does not occur to them, even though they do think it is important.

Use the following suggestions to ensure continuous attention:

* If you are not yet a member of LVAK, [**sign up**](https://lvak.nl/vereniging/inschrijven/) and use the materials they have about all forms of domestic violence and all steps of the reporting code.
* Include domestic violence and the reporting code in the induction program for new employees.
* Keep the topic on the agenda, for example during team meetings, case discussions and during peer review.
* Learning during working hours.
* Keep it in the spotlight by offering information in different ways. Think of posters, flyers, sending out good examples, intranet.
* Set up a buddy system in which an experienced employee takes a new employee under his or her wing.

##### **4. Put positive outcomes in the spotlight**

To motivate colleagues to continue using the reporting code, it helps to highlight its positive points and name them explicitly.

'I hand out a lot of compliments, confirm that it is good that they have taken the reporting code and give examples of what has worked. And if it didn't go so well, we seize it to learn from together.'

The added value of the work of the attention officer is also important to peddle:

'You could also see this at locations where we already had a focus officer: the reporting code was used more there than at the locations where there was none.'

##### **5. Request information from Safe Home**

Many Safe Home organisations offer to come and provide information to organisations in their region. For example, the Flevoland region has a Meldcode Tour. Ask Safe Home in your region about the possibilities. This increases awareness about the reporting code and lowers the threshold for calling in the help of Safe Home.

Organisations themselves are responsible for ensuring that their employees are well-equipped to work with the reporting code. That starts with familiarity with the reporting code and, above all, understanding its importance.

##### **5 tips for the organisation**

##### **1. Appoint an attention officer**

*An important first step to put and keep the reporting code on the agenda in your organisation is to appoint an attention officer. A focus officer is an employee who has the additional task of implementing and safeguarding the reporting code for domestic violence and child abuse. He or she also supports colleagues in following the steps of the reporting code if they suspect domestic violence. In a large organisation, it is strongly recommended to appoint several attention officers, especially if an organisation has several locations.*

*'You can't be the only attention officer available for five locations. The subject is too important for that – it should not be without obligation.'*

##### **2. Integrate the reporting code into your working method**

To prevent the reporting code from being perceived by employees as 'another thing', it is advisable to integrate the reporting code into the existing working method. This way you normalize working according to the steps of the reporting code. One way to facilitate this is, for example, by including the five steps as a pop-up in the registration system/file – this creates a clear internal route on how to go through the reporting code.

##### **3. Convey what you stand for on your website**

Not only internally it must be clear 'what we are of', it is also important for clients and families. For example, describe that you work with the reporting code and that from the first contact, you have an eye for safety as a standard part of your work. The aim is to help, and together we look at what is needed. By being open and normalising, the load becomes less heavy.

##### **4. Facilitate working with the reporting code**

Employees must feel that 'the organisation' has the reporting code high on the agenda and facilitates working with the reporting code. This is mainly expressed by making time and space available for the attention officers to do their work and for increasing the knowledge of your employees about the reporting code. Training on the reporting code and domestic violence should be mandatory for all employees:

'Structural attention to the subject only works if employees are allowed to follow training during working hours. A learning pot with time for training could be a possibility. And including training in induction programs too.'

Other ways in which you can facilitate employees as an organisation are to offer time to set up a buddy system so that employees can learn from each other, to organize InterVision and for case discussions. All ways in which employees can learn with and from each other.

##### **5. Offer employees training opportunities**

Sufficient knowledge about the domestic violence reporting code is the basis for actually being able to work with it. Therefore, give your employees time and budget to brush up on their knowledge. For example, also include it in the onboarding program of new employees. And ensure that it does not stop at one course or training afternoon but builds in refresher courses or moments. Because knowledge and skills are better retained through repetition. And the more knowledge you have, the more confident you are.

### **2) Preventing domestic violence**

How nice would it be if problems in families could be prevented. That is of course a utopia, but what can be done is to prevent worse problems. Often the outside world only finds out when a lot is already not going well in a family, while in retrospect there were already signals. There are also factors in which there is a greater risk of domestic violence. If you recognize these risks at an early stage, you can prevent misery together with the family and you will not be stuck afterwards with 'If only I had ...'.

What tips do others have to prevent domestic violence?

Early recognition of risks and incipient problems in families can contribute to the prevention of domestic violence. That is why it is important to focus on early detection of risks and tackling emerging problems before following the reporting code. Step 0 so to speak. What should you pay attention to?

**4 tips based on practical experiences that help prevent domestic violence**

##### **1. Make sure you know the risk and protective factors**

To contribute to the prevention of domestic violence, you must know which risk factors increase the risk of domestic violence occurring and maintaining. These factors can be behaviours, circumstances, or characteristics of family members. Usually, there is an accumulation of risks.

'If parents come to you because of financial problems, you also look at the effect on the children, for example, whether they can play sports or go on a school trip. So, the practical aspects. But you should also look at whether there may be other risks. That's where it goes wrong because that doesn't happen.'

The different forms of domestic violence have different risk and protective factors. For example, a power imbalance between partners is a risk factor for partner violence and single parenthood for child abuse. If you identify risk factors in a family, always consider which protective factors you could use to reduce the risk.

**Please note! Risk factors are factors that we know from research that increase the risk of domestic violence. The presence of such a factor therefore says nothing about the actual occurrence of domestic violence. Known protective factors can counterbalance the risks. An example of such protective factors is a support network.**

By being extra alert to stressful circumstances in the first years of a child's life, worse problems can be prevented. Read the [**interview with Tessa Roseboom**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/gelijke-kansen-augeo-magazine-27/interview-tessa-roseboom) for this.

##### **2. Get used to talking to clients about relationships, upbringing, care and what can be difficult for them**

Many professionals are aware that talking about the way family members interact with each other is a delicate topic. How parents raise their children, how caregivers take care of a family member, how partners interact with each other – these are very personal topics that you can think differently about. Because these are such personal topics, it makes educators and caregivers vulnerable: a comment about them can quickly feel like an attack. And as a professional, you may be afraid of saying the wrong thing or unfairly interfering in something.

'It helps if you make raising the baby part of your work from day 1. That you don't wait until the eighth day to do that. Then you can more easily discuss worrying signals if you pick them up.'
A maternity nurse

If that also applies to you, it can help to get used to asking yourself the question more often in a casual and accessible way: Hey, how are things at home? Are you making it a bit?

That is why it is important to get used to family members talking about parenting, parenting, caring for a loved one, etc., and what can be difficult in this. If you talk to families from the start about 'how are things at home', it lowers the threshold to talk about difficulties as well. Especially if you are judgment-free and curious.

Parenthood is a hell of a job, he says. Professor Herman Baartman. Just that recognition in your contact with parents makes all the difference for the conversation that follows.[**Read the full interview**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/interviews-vol-inzichten/herman-baartman-ouderschap)**.**

##### **3. Normalize talking about difficulties**

For various professional groups, such as in elderly care, paramedics or education, it is not part of their daily work to talk to clients about problems or difficulties. In those sectors, professionals do talk about small talk or about the actions to be carried out with clients, but the step to talking about problems is quite a big one. It helps to askdifficult topics as a standard. The message you give family members is: Everyone has problems sometimes, every parent finds parenting difficult sometimes, and every caregiver sometimes gets over their heads. And that's okay.

'I understand the professional's hesitation to ask further questions, but I want to get rid of my complaints. Especially if I visit the physiotherapist more often and there is a link with stress complaints at home, you have to ask about it. And then it may be that I get angry with you as a client, but then I feel seen.'
Experience expert about a physiotherapist who did not ask about her abusive relationship:

Professionals notice that there is a field of tension in the normalisation of talking about problems. After all, you want to map out what the situation in the family is like, and what risks and starting problems are present. Too much emphasis on problems can give the client the feeling that he/she is doing everything wrong in the upbringing/care. But if you leave too much control with the client/parents, there is a risk that problems and risks will be brushed aside or downplayed. **It is therefore important to be alert to this**. It is also important to take the time to have a conversation.

'If you are afraid of not having enough time, take the time you normally spend on small talk, use that time and ask how things are going, have genuine interest.'

Parents need support, from professionals and their environment. The Ode to Parents campaign contains many tips and stories of experience. To do this, go to[**First 1000 days: Healthy Generation Program**](https://gezondegeneratie.nl/eerste-1000-dagen/)**.**

Informal care, the care for a loved one who is ill for a long time, has a disability or is in need of help, can be tough. Although this care can feel obvious to informal caregivers and they are therefore not inclined to ask for help, it can help them if they know that support is possible:[**Support from your municipality**](https://www.mantelzorg.nl/onderwerpen/ondersteuning/ondersteuning-van-je-gemeente/)**.**

##### **4. Also talk to colleagues about risks and emerging problems**

Several professionals also find it difficult to talk to colleagues about risks and emerging problems in the families they work with. They hesitate whether they see it right, have the experience that colleagues do not share their vision or disagree with their judgment. Or they don't know how to discuss it with colleagues and what questions they can ask each other.

Therefore, get used to talking to your colleagues about these topics more often and in a more accessible way. Call in the help of the attention officer within your organisation; He or she can regularly put the subject on the agenda or find ways to discuss it among themselves.

**4 tips for an attention officer in preventing domestic violence**

##### **1. Provide continuous attention**

In general, professionals find it important to focus on incipient problems and thus prevent worse. It's just difficult to keep the subject on the radar. That is why it is important to continue to pay attention to the subject of risks and incipient problems.

Ways to draw continuous attention to the topic:

* If you are not yet a member of LVAK, [**sign up**](https://lvak.nl/vereniging/inschrijven/) and use the materials they have about all forms of domestic violence and all steps of the reporting code.
* Keep it in the spotlight by offering information in different ways. Think of posters, flyers, sending out good examples, intranet.
* Include risk and protective factors that may be relevant to the families who are supported in your organisation in the onboarding program of new employees.
* Keep the topic on the agenda, for example during team meetings, case discussions and during peer review.
* Arrange with the management that you can learn during working hours.
* Set up a buddy system in which an experienced employee takes a new employee under his or her wing.

##### **2. Make sure that colleagues share knowledge and experiences**

One way to ensure that your colleagues start to see risks more as part of their daily contact with clients is to share knowledge and experiences within the team. If colleagues often discuss the subject among themselves, it remains a 'topical' topic and does not move into the background. In addition, the knowledge of all colleagues grows, they know better where to go if they run into something, and it is easier to share an experience yourself. Sharing positive experiences is specifically mentioned because now the negative outcomes are often emphasized. From these successful experiences, you learn why some things are going well and the reporting code comes to life more.

To talk to colleagues about how you, as an organization, can lower the threshold for clients/parents, the article How do we create a society in which parents dare to ask for help themselves? For inspiration: **'**[**How do we create a society in which parents dare to ask for help themselves?**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/aandacht-voor-ouderschap-augeo-magazine-25/opinie-hoe-zorgen-we-ervoor-dat-ouders-zelf-hulp-vragen)**'**

##### **3. Make knowledge available**

Professionals need to know which risk factors can increase the risk of domestic violence occurring and maintaining it and what protective factors can counterbalance this. These factors can be behaviours, circumstances, or characteristics of family members. Usually, there is an accumulation of risks. More information about this can be found for each form of domestic violence in the[**fact sheets on huiselijkgeweld.nl**](https://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl/vormen)

##### **4. Encourage colleagues to discuss risks with clients at an early stage**

Make sure that employees already make safety a topic of conversation in the first conversation / in the intake with a client or a family. In doing so, they normalise the subject for themselves and also convey to clients that it is a topic of conversation, that they can talk about it and that they are not judged. More information about having a conversation with the client/parents can be found in theme 5 'Discussing concerns' of the[**Wijzer met de meldcode**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/)campaign**.**

***Two examples of effective preventive interventions:***[***Precaution***](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/langetermijngevolgen-augeo-magazine-16/reportage-voorzorg)***and***[***Sturdy Parenting***](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/gelijke-kansen-augeo-magazine-27/reportage-stevig-ouderschap)***. In both programs, home visits are made to families with young children in circumstances that are more difficult than average.***

**3 recommendations for organisations in preventing domestic violence**

##### **1. Offer time and space to learn and perform**

To facilitate employees to learn about risks and starting problems, it helps to offer them time to follow training during working hours. For example, offer them a learning pot that includes time for training, which lowers the threshold for learning knowledge and skills and keeping them up to date. Including training in the induction program of new employees also contributes to this.

##### **2. Include asking about risks and incipient problems in the working method**

To keep the focus on incipient problems and risks, it helps to include questions about them in the normal working methods, for example during the intake. An example is the screening of vulnerable elderly people for elder abuse, as in[**the Spaarne Gasthuis.**](https://www.nvsha.nl/files/14352/%28Kwetsbare%29%20Ouderen%20op%20de%20SEH.pdf)

In addition to lowering the threshold for your employees to raise risks with clients, as an organisation you send the message that it is a normal topic of conversation for you: *'Here you can talk about that. We don't judge problems.'*

##### **3. Provide low-threshold cooperation with specialist help**

An approach that works preventively is to offer specialist help within another organisation. This shortens the line and helps to offer help in an accessible way. Examples of this support are within schools or other places where the children and parents come, such as district teams and health centres. Then more steps can be taken preventively and further steps often do not have to be taken.

'At our school, low-threshold youth care is available in school. This allows a conversation with parents to be held at an early stage, even before there are real problems.'
An example from education

'Provide a POH-GGZ at school. We do have them at the doctor's office, so why not at school?'
A youth doctor draws a comparison with the general practice

More examples of youth care at school can be found at the[**Netherlands Youth Institute**](https://www.nji.nl/verbinding-onderwijs-en-jeugdhulp/jeugdhulp-op-school-hoe-zit-het)**,** among others**.**

Another example of good cooperation between parties to prevent problems is the[**Community School in Tilburg**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/gelijke-kansen-augeo-magazine-27/reportage-community-school-tilburg)**.** Here, the primary school works together with parents and with facilities that deal with children, from pregnancy to the age of 14, such as childcare, library, sports, welfare and youth health care.

[**Handle with Care**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/handle-with-care/)**,** a collaboration between Safe Home, schools and compulsory education, also contributes to the prevention of more serious problems because children receive support in a safe environment after an incident of domestic violence in which the police have been involved at school.

### **3)  Objective signalling**

Yes or no. Black or white. Objectivity is important in case of suspicions of domestic violence and child abuse. Mapping signals in an objective way, how do you do that? And what about emotional neglect, for example? With these tips from practice, you can get started.

**Step 1** of the reporting code means that you identify signals that you have noticed. Simply put, a signal is something in behaviour, appearance or interaction that you notice and that makes you think 'Hey, is that right? What could be going on?'. A signal can indicate domestic violence, but it doesn't have to be – domestic violence is a possible explanation. That is why it is important to map out what other signals you notice. But how do you do that?

**6 tips to recognise and map signals as a professional**

#### **1. Be alert to signs**

A healthy alertness is important to be able to pick up signals. This means that you recognize that domestic violence can also occur in the families you supervise, the children in your class, the elderly you care for.

Please note! A signal can indicate domestic violence, but it doesn't have to be – domestic violence is a possible explanation. Signals are rarely specific to domestic violence. Moreover, it is usually a combination of signals that gives you the idea that something is going on.

#### **2. Talk about it with colleagues and ask for advice**

To increase your alertness and feel more confident about your ability to signal, it helps in the first instance to ask for advice from your organisation's attention officer if you have doubts about signals. He or she can watch and ask questions to get your signals clearer.

'It may be that you have a gut feeling, then others can help put it into words.'

Safe Home has also been approached with this question.

'You learn a lot by sparring with colleagues in daily practice and helping each other.'

Norms and values about raising children or about healthy manners in families can differ. By talking to each other about what you think is permissible, the uncertainty about signals can decrease.

#### **3. Make use of signal lists**

There are lists of signs of different forms of domestic violence**.**[**Signals Map Domestic Violence and Child Abuse**](https://signalenkaart.nl/)is a tool in which signals are listed per form and age group.

Please note! A list of signs is a tool, it is not a checklist to prove domestic violence.

#### **4. Present your signals directly to the client/parents**

It is important to present what you have noticed to the parents / the client as soon as possible – don't wait until you 'know for sure'. Tell without judgment and with a curious attitude what you have seen, heard, and smelled. It may be that your client/parents have a very plausible explanation, with which they immediately take away your concerns.

In the article **'**[**Beyond the diffidence: a good conversation with the parents**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/psychische-mishandeling-en-verwaarlozing/in-de-praktijk-3-casussen)**',** José Koster explains how you can address signals in a good conversation with parents. The tips she gives in this also apply to a conversation with, for example, an informal caregiver or a client without children.

#### **5. Do the child check and informal care check**

Especially for professionals who work with adults, you must conduct the child check and informal care check with your clients as standard. This means that in the first contact with certain groups of clients, you check whether they are caring for minor children or adults who are dependent on their care. And whether those children/adults are safe with them.The[**child check**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/kindcheck/)also has added value if you work with children: it helps you to be alert to parental signals that may affect the care or safety of minor children.

In the article **'**[**Was their patient's child safe?**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/alert-magazine/in-de-praktijk-was-het-kind-van-hun-patient-veilig)**',** you can read three examples of how medical professionals perform the child check.

#### **6. Capture signals**

Mapping signals means that you also record them in the file. You can read more about how to do this carefully under theme 9 **'**[**Fact or opinion**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/feit-of-mening/)**'.**

Recording signals is important because you usually need several signals to be able to speak of a suspicion. Only by registering will you get a picture of any accumulation.

'Especially with emotional neglect, the alarm bells don't go off with one signal, but with 10 times such a signal, they do.'

It is also important to write down signals as concretely as possible. Make a distinction between 'what do you see' and 'what do you think', so that they can be easily separated from each other later.

**4 practical tips for attention officers for objective signalling**

#### **1. Make knowledge about signals available**

Make sure that employees have easy access to information about signals. For example, put[**the signal lists**](https://signalenkaart.nl/)on your intranet or hand out a list on paper.

The[**National Signaling Instrument for Child Abuse**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/onderzoeksspecial-nieuwe-inzichten-betere-resultaten/signalering-nsk)(NSK) has been developed for hospitals.

It is important that you, as a focus officer, know what the difference is between identifying, screening and appraisal, and what instruments are available for this. You can read more about this in the[**interview with Claudia van der Put**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/aan-de-slag-met-kennis-augeo-magazine-onderzoeksspecial/signaleren-screen-en-taxeren-tijdig-risico-s-inschatten-hoe-doe-je-dat)**.**

#### **2. Support colleagues in mapping signals**

You are not only a source of information for your colleagues when it comes to interpreting signals, but you can also support them in noting down signals in the file. Take a look at how they do it and show how you do it yourself.

Help colleagues remember that they also conduct the child check / informal care check with clients. In the delusion of the day, employees sometimes forget that. An extra alert can help. The standard inclusion in the working method can also contribute to this, for example in the intake form and the further treatment process using a pop-up has been mentioned as a good example.

The[**NHTC Attention Officer consultation form**](https://www.augeo.nl/-/media/Files/Diversen/Overlegformulier-aandachtsfunctionaris-NHTC.ashx)helps you to have a structured conversation with your colleague.

#### **3. Organise a team meeting about signalling**

Spend a team meeting once on identifying domestic violence. At the LVAK material is available for a presentation or a short exercise, for example. You can also play a game together, such as the[**Behind the front door game**](https://achterdevoordeurproducties.nl/product/achter-de-voordeur-spel/)**.**

'With a game like that, you can deal with the subject a little more lightly.'

The[**LVAK**](https://www.augeo.nl/lvak.nl/shop/)also has games to talk to each other about domestic violence. For example, the Norms and Values Game can help to exchange with each other which behaviour in families everyone finds permissible and thus increase signal sensitivity.

#### **4. Do the thought exercise 'Safety behind the front door'**

A valuable tip from an expert by experience is to do an exercise in the team to discuss safety behind the front door.

'Also ask yourself: the safety behind the front door, how important is that to you? Discuss that with each other. And then realize that if your safety at home is good, you can also develop better in other areas. If that is a topic of conversation with your colleagues, you may also dare to talk to clients earlier or more. That might help lower the threshold.'

it is important that your employees can objectively identify signals. That is step 1 of the reporting code. How can organisations facilitate this? Check out the tips from practice.

**3 tips for organisations when signalling objectively**

#### **1. Provide an accessible registration system**

Professionals often indicate that it takes a lot of time to register. Registration is also important when mapping signals. Check whether there is a way to make it easier for your employees to record signals in the file. For example, by implementing[**the signal map**](https://signalenkaart.nl/)**.**

#### **2. Guarantee the child check and informal care check**

Professionals do not always think about also taking the child check / informal care check from clients. It then helps to insert this standard in the working method, for example on the intake form or as a pop-up in the registration system and then also in the treatment plan and process. As an organisation, you can facilitate that and ensure that it is implemented.

'It would help me if the EPD automatically pops up the child check form in the adult file, or the reporting code step 1, think of this and this, so a reminder. That helps you not to forget and to do it carefully.'
A psychologist

#### **3. Provide sufficient time and space for expertise promotion**

To increase the signal sensitivity of employees, there must be sufficient time to learn about it. Make sure they can follow training during working hours. For example, offer them a learning pot that includes time for training, which lowers the threshold for learning knowledge and skills and keeping them up to date. Regular attention to the subject during team meetings or time for case consultations is also helpful.

### **4) Asking for advice**

An important principle of the reporting code is: Don't do it alone. Because recognising and tackling domestic violence is complex. Step 2 of the reporting code is not for nothing: Consult with an expert colleague or ask for advice from Safe Home. But how do you organise that properly? What should you pay attention to? Look below for tips and experiences from professionals from various sectors.

Step 2 of the reporting code seems very simple, namely: consult with an expert colleague or Safe Home. You do this to be able to interpret signals and to discuss what next steps you may need to take. But you can also run into things when consulting with a colleague or Safe Home. You're not alone. See below what tips from other professionals can help you.

**5 tips for asking for advice from others as a professional**

#### **1. Involve the domestic violence attention officer from the beginning**

The domestic violence officer is the right person in the organisation to discuss your doubts about the approach with. In many organizations, an employee has been appointed for this purpose. A focus officer is someone who has specific expertise in tackling domestic violence and the reporting code for domestic violence and child abuse **and can look** with you and ask questions to clarify your signals. So, make sure you know who that is and when and how you can reach him or her.

'Our attention officer is easily accessible – it's so nice to be able to spar with her when I have doubts.'

If you work with adults or children as a self-employed person, you are also obliged to work according to the reporting code, but it is probably difficult to have all the expertise in this yourself. Therefore, look outside your practice for an organization that does have a focus officer and try to join them.

Is there no attention officer in your organization? You can also always contact Safe Home for advice.

#### **2. Make sparring together part of your daily work**

Even if you have doubts about signals or possible next steps, it helps to exchange ideas with colleagues about signals you receive in daily practice.

'If you already have a gut feeling, you hope that a colleague will ask a question, then you dare to talk about it. If someone else puts it into words, others say: oh, now I see it.'

By talking to each other about domestic violence, you help each other and learn a lot from each other.

'If you seek each other out earlier to spar, you also feel less alone.'

For example, about norms and values, about raising children or manners in families. By talking to each other about what you think is permissible, the uncertainty about signals can decrease.

#### **3. Know that you can always call Safe Home for advice**

Safe Home is the advice and reporting centre for domestic violence and child abuse. Anyone who suspects domestic violence can contact Safe Home for advice and support. So, you as a professional can always do that too. According to the KNMG reporting code, doctors are obliged in step 2 to call Safe Home for advice in addition to peer consultation.

If you need support in carrying out the advice, a consultation is also possible. So, it doesn't have to be a one-off advice, Safe Home can offer tailor-made solutions.

'Because there is quite a lot of emphasis on reporting, people often don't know that you can also call Safe Home for advice and consultation. That needs to be magnified much more.'

'We need to put the S of the former Domestic Violence Support Centre and the A of the current Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Advice and Reporting Centre more in the foreground.'

If you need specific expertise, for example on elder abuse, human trafficking or honour-related violence, please let the Safe Home employee you get on the phone let us know. Then the person with the most expertise in that field can call you back or refer you to the agency that has that expertise, such as forensic expertise or expertise on PCF (Paediatric Condition Falsification) – not every Safe Home has that in-house. And as a doctor, ask for a trusted doctor.

It is important to realize that you are asking for anonymous advice; Safe Home does register your details, but not those of the family you are calling about.

[**Watch the animation of Safe Home**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEBSIWWxY1U)to see how a consultation with them works.

#### **4. Is there a repetition of violence? Let Safe Home know!**

Contacting Safe Home at an early stage can help to get an earlier and better picture of the repetition of violence.

'Safe Home could already ask the professional in a consultation whether there is a repetition of violence. Then Safe Home thinks along at an earlier stage about the nature and seriousness of the situation and that helps the professional in his actions.'
A Safe Home employee

The same applies the other way around: if you, as a professional, contact Safe Home for advice and you know that there is a recurrence of violence or neglect in the family you are calling about, Safe Home will let us know. For example, Safe Home can provide better tailor-made advice and support you in acting more effectively or deciding together that a report is necessary.

#### **5. Record the outcome of step 2 in the file**

Include in your client's file with whom you consulted and what the outcome of the consultation was. If you have received advice that you do not follow, write it down as well, with the reason why you deviate from it. Also, write down the next steps you are going to take. More about this will be discussed in the ninth theme of[**Wijzer met de meldcode**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/)**:** Facts and opinions.

As an expert in the approach to domestic violence in your organisation, you are of course able to act adequately in the event of suspicions of domestic violence. In addition, you advise and guide your colleagues in this. But there are certain situations where you also want to consult or ask for advice. Read tips from other attention officers about giving advice and asking for advice yourself.

**4 practical tips for attention officers on giving (and asking) advice**

#### **1. Be available to your colleagues, as a source of information and coach**

First of all, it is important that your colleagues know what they can approach you for in your role as an attention officer. Let them know that you are there to advise and guide them through all steps of the reporting code. Make sure colleagues know where to find you: when can you be reached and how?

In step 2, the emphasis is on helping to objectify the signals that your colleagues present to you and discuss what next steps they need to take.

In addition, as a focus officer, you also offer guidance in implementing the advice you give. This increases the expertise of your colleagues and strengthens the approach – after all, two heads are better than one.

'I go through the reporting code together with the professional – that removes the threshold and increases support among employees. Moreover, repetition makes it come to life

#### **2. Make use of Safe Home's advisory function**

The advisory function of Safe Home could be used much more than is currently the case. Safe Home can not only give one-off advice on, for example, interpreting signals, but also offer tailor-made solutions in the form of a consultation process.

'Because there is quite a lot of emphasis on reporting, people often don't know that you can also call Safe Home for advice and consultation. That needs to be magnified much more.'

#### **3. Ask for specific expertise if needed**

If you need specific expertise, for example on elder abuse, human trafficking or honour-related violence, you can report this to Safe Home. The employee you get on the phone can then have the right person call back or refer you to the agency that has that expertise, such as forensic expertise or expertise on PCF (Paediatric Condition Falsification) – not every Safe Home has that in-house.

'Find permanent contact persons at Safe Home because not all employees have the same knowledge of, for example, elder abuse. Above all, ask for advice to interpret signals. Especially in elderly care, the advisory function could use a boost.'
A participant of Safe Home

#### **4. Is there a repetition of violence? Let Safe Home know!**

Contacting Safe Home at an early stage can help to get an earlier and better picture of the repetition of violence.

'Safe Home could already ask the professional in a consultation whether there is a repetition of violence. Then Safe Home thinks along at an earlier stage about the nature and seriousness of the situation and that helps theprofessional in his actions.'
A Safe Home employee

The same applies the other way around: if you, as a professional, contact Safe Home for advice and you know that there is a recurrence of violence or neglect in the family you are calling about, Safe Home will let us know. For example, Safe Home can provide better tailor-made advice and support you in acting more effectively or deciding together that a report is necessary.

It is important that your employees can work according to the steps of the reporting code if necessary. As an organization, you are obliged to facilitate this. What can you do as an organisation with regard to the second step: consult with an expert colleague or Safe Home? Check out the tips below from others.

**3 tips for organisations in step 2 of the reporting code**

#### **1. Appoint enough attention officers**

Advising and consulting with employees is an important task of the domestic violence officer. That takes time. Therefore, make sure that there are enough attention officers available in your organisation. Especially in an organisation with multiple locations, it is advisable to appoint several attention officers.

'You can't be the only attention officer available for five locations. The subject is too important for that.'

An important added value of several focus officers is that they can complement and reinforce each other.

'With several attention officers, the expertise in the organisation increases, as does the 'don't-do-it-alone' adage.'

#### **2. Offer the attention officer time and space for advice**

Advising and guiding employees takes time. It is therefore important that they are given the space to do so and that it is included in their job description.

'We do have an attention officer, but he only has 4 hours a month for all his tasks. So yes, there is not much time to ask them for advice.'

3. Make time available for training the attention officer

To be able to perform his or her task properly, it is important that the attention officer is well-trained and can follow regular refresher courses. Not only about the reporting code but also about advice and coaching skills.

The LVAK **(**[**www.lvak.nl**](https://www.lvak.nl/)**),** the national association for attention officers, offers training and support for attention officers.

'It must be well maintained, without limitation of time. The LVAK quality mark does help, that you show that you are a member.'

### **5) Discussing concerns**

Of course, it would be nice if problems and concerns were discussed with the client/parents at an early stage. You don't wait until you're sure something is wrong. The family is the main party in this conversation and is a cooperation partner from the start. There is a conversation from person to person: the professional is curious, interested and without judgment. Language is very important in this, to take the weight of the conversation away from it for all parties.

After you have mapped out signals in Step 1 and consulted with the attention officer or Safe Home in Step 2, you will have a conversation with the client in Step 3. If you have worked together with the client/family members from step 1, and you have worked with them from the first signal, most barriers will have been removed. These tips will also help you further.

**6 Tips for Professionals to Discuss Concerns**

#### **1 Have a person-to-person conversation**

To have a good and honest person-to-person conversation with your client/parents about (suspicions of) domestic violence, it is important that you know yourself well, and that you can take your feelings seriously and use them. By including your feelings in the conversation, you are more human, and honest and the client/parent feels better seen. This means that if you find the conversation exciting or you feel insecure, for example, it is better to name it. Instead of freezing or ignoring the tension.

'I see when you are nervous or when things affect you. If you don't do anything with that, don't talk about it, then I feel it and then I drop out.'
Experience expert

'It helps enormously if you make yourself vulnerable and human. For example, say: "I find this conversation difficult myself" and let parents know that you have recognition for their situation, that they are struggling.'
Participant of the district team

Don't be afraid to damage the relationship of trust with a conversation: that usually doesn't go that fast. More often, parents/clients do not feel seen and taken seriously if you do not have a conversation with them or withhold things from them.

'What does that relationship of trust mean if you don't even dare to talk to me?'
Experience expert

Also read José Koster's tips on a person-to-person conversation with parents about concerns**:**[**Discussing concerns with parents**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/meldcode-augeo-magazine-11/tips-zorgen-bespreken-met-ouders)**.**

#### **2. Pay attention to language use**

Words matter. Especially when it comes to discussing concerns about the home situation. Therefore, pay attention to the effect that language has on your conversation partner. It is important to adapt your language use to the level of the other person. Emphasize that you want to work together with family members and talk about 'we' and 'looking for a solution together'.

Also be aware that a term such as 'reporting code' can be a deterrent, because it evokes the idea among both professionals and parents that the conversation will always lead to a report.

'Lower the threshold and say, for example: "I prefer to call it a code of help, we are looking for help together. Shall we talk to Safe Home to ask..." Also make it clear: "I'm not going to solve it for you, I don't bear the responsibility here. I can work with you to look at what is needed and who can help you with that."
Expert social domain

#### **3. Take your time**

Taking the time doesn't mean waiting to discuss your concerns; That increases the threshold for yourself to start the conversation. Moreover, it is very unsafe for the family if you have been walking around with concerns for some time and have not discussed them with them.

Taking your time does mean that you don't go faster than the family members want and can go. And sometimes that takes time. Some clients/parents react angrily or defensively to your concerns. Some don't understand what you're talking about. It is important not to be put off by such an initial negative reaction. Dare to take it and take your time.

'A conversation alone can be helpful; you can't solve everything at once. But a conversation can be enough to plant seeds. So start the conversation.'
Experience expert

'It helps you to realize that you are just a passer-by in your client's life. And you must invest in that role. You lay a foundation for building trust in the professionals who come after you'
Midwife

In other words: every contact is an investment in a client's trust in professionals. He or she may not be able to ask for help yet, but he or she may be able to ask the professional who will come after you.

#### **4. Stick to the facts**

Present your concerns to the client in a concrete and factual way: what have you seen, heard, smelled...? And why do you worry about that? Once the facts are on the table, you enter into a genuinely curious conversation with the client. How does he view that? What does he want to say about that?

'I may not like to hear that as a client, and I may also react emotionally to it, but honest explanations make me feel seen and taken seriously.'
Experience expert

It is important that your attitude and words are non-judgmental and that you do not take your standards as a general standard. That way you get away from the facts. See also theme '9 - Facts or opinion' of[**Wijzer with the reporting code**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/)**.**

#### **5. Prepare for the interview**

Good preparation can help you enter the conversation with more confidence. You can consult with Safe Home or with the attention officer in advance about how best to approach the conversation. And if you have doubts about your expertise or your safety, have the conversation together with the attention officer or with another colleague involved in the family, for example.

'You can just say to parents: I would like advice from an expert about your situation and would therefore like to call Safe Home. Shall we do that together?'
Safe Home Employee

#### **6. Don't forget the children**

In many cases, the children are overlooked. In divorce cases, for example, it can therefore help to always put a photo of the child on the table during conversations with parents.

'If we digress, I can point to the child and say: no, we are here for the child.'
Psychologist

In addition, it is important to talk to children. It is important for you as a professional because children have indispensable information about their own situation. And for children themselves, it is essential because they feel heard and seen. Who has the conversation with children depends on the situation. Sometimes it can be more obvious that someone they already trust talks to the children, for example from daycare or school. Or that a professional is called in who is an expert in talking to children, such as someone from the Youth & Family Centre.

A psychologist indicates that in their organization children always get a different therapist than parents, who then accompanies the child to conversations.

'The child's therapist may be there for the child 100%, the family therapist is multi-partial.'
Psychologist

Want to know more?

Read more[**tips for a good conversation with a child**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/themas/meldcode/tips-voor-een-goed-gesprek/)**.**

**In the**[**guide Permission for help with child abuse,**](https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-02737a817790d32ec5d52a74eb8b4afa622fd6f6/pdf)you can read when you have to ask permission from parents in advance.

N.B. Involving children is not only important in step 3, but in all steps of the reporting code. You can read how to do this carefully in the[**Guide to the participation of children in the reporting code**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/themas/meldcode/afwegingskader/-/media/Files/Handreiking_-Participatie-van-kinderen-in-de-Meldcode-huiselijk-geweld-en-kindermishandeling_2018.ashx)**.**

**Do you want to learn more about how to involve children?**[**View the 6 modules of Kind Centraal**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/kindcentraal/)**.**

Many professionals find step 3 of the reporting code a difficult step. They feel insecure about it, are afraid of the reaction of the client/parents or think that they have to be very sure of their concerns before they can start the conversation. How do you support your colleagues in this conversation?

**5 Tips for Attention Officers to Discuss Concerns**

#### **1. Focus on attitude change**

To reduce the fear of talking about worries with family members, a change in attitude is needed in the first place. Many professionals are afraid that it will disrupt the relationship or that they will have to solve the client's situation.

'We as GPs should be the party that understands that starting a conversation strengthens the relationship. Maybe it's just to listen, especially as a doctor you can mean a lot. So you don't have to worry that you have to solve it alone.'
General practitioner

It is good to realize that the employees of your organization have chosen their profession for a reason: they want to mean something to the adults and children they work with. Overcoming the fear of starting the conversation is essential for this. It can help them if they know that they don't have to solve the situation, but that it is often helpful that people can tell their story, and that the professional asks the right questions, listens without judgment hears people and takes them seriously.

'You don't have to find the solution in 1 conversation. By just listening, you also get a lot of information that you can use to move forward. But more important than that is that the client feels heard and taken seriously.'
District team employee about the fear of having to solve the situation

The use of experts by experience can play an important role in this change in attitude.

'What does that relationship of trust mean if you don't even dare to talk to me?'
Expert by experience about the fear of disrupting the relationship

'Keep in mind that you should not immediately launch a complete invasion of what is familiar to the client. It may not be safe at his or her home, but it is familiar.'
Experience expert

#### **2. Continuously train conversation skills**

An important way to reduce the fear of a conversation with parents / the client about worries is to train conversation skills. This makes your colleagues more capable of acting. It is important to keep practising these skills: refreshing them at least every year is crucial.

#### **3. Coach your colleagues**

In addition to being a source of information and an advice point, as a focus officer, you also have a role in coaching your colleagues in conducting conversations with clients.

'It is important that you ask questions about your colleague's fears. Because as a professional you have to have that conversation with your client, so help your colleague to get clarity about what exactly the fear consists of. And if it doesn't work internally, you should ask Safe Home for advice.'
District team employee

Have conversations together, if necessary, listen in and give feedback on what is going well and where you see improvement. This is how the expertise of your colleagues grows.

#### **4. Organise feedback**

Learning from each other is a good way to increase expertise in the organization. One way to better equip your colleagues for conversation is InterVision and peer consultation. Invest in a culture in your organisation in which colleagues give and ask each other for feedback, ask each other to have conversations together and learn from each other.

A buddy system can also be a good way to ensure that colleagues learn from each other and grow expertise in the organisation. You can do this by having an experienced employee take a new employee under his or her wing. Watching a senior, getting advice and practising together helps the junior, especially with having conversations

#### **5. Make information about conversation techniques and exercises available**

As part of Wijzer met de meldcode (Wiser with the reporting code), an extensive online conversation tool has been developed with various working methods:[**In conversation about reporting code dilemmas**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/gesprekshandreiking/)**.** Work with colleagues on various recognisable cases.

Finally, also read how to[**talk to parents**](https://www.nji.nl/kindermishandeling/hoe-praat-ik-met-ouders)**.**

**2 tips for organisations on the theme of 'Discussing concerns'**

#### **1. Offer time and space to train skills**

Talking about (suspected) domestic violence requires skills from employees. Especially if domestic violence is not the 'core business' in your organization, it is important to continue to pay attention to it and let employees practice it.

'We also have to learn to stand firm and dare to discuss concerns. With each other, but also with clients.'
Meeting participant

#### **2. Invest in a culture where employees can learn from each other**

Learning from each other is a good way to increase expertise in the organisation. This requires an internal culture in which it is natural to learn from and with each other. Therefore, invest in a culture in your organisation in which colleagues give and ask each other for feedback, ask each other to have conversations together and learn from each other.

Ways in which you can facilitate employees as an organisation are to offer time to set up a buddy system so that employees can learn from each other, to organize InterVision and supervision and for case discussions. All ways in which employees can learn with and from each other.

### **6) Weighing information**

There is no scale to weigh all the information collected. How does that work with step 4 of the reporting code? What matters is that you make an assessment of the nature and seriousness of the situation based on the information from steps 1 to 3. The aim is to answer the question: has my suspicion of domestic violence remained or has it been removed? But how do you do that? These tips from professionals will help you further.

In step 4 of the reporting code, it is important that you weigh the collected information. In practice, this step sometimes raises questions. These tips will help you further.

**7 tips for weighing information as a professional**

#### **1. Don't do it alone**

The most important advice for this step is also: don't do it alone. The attention officer is the designated person in the organization to take information into account. If possible, take this step with a multidisciplinary team. For example, in the Care Advice Team (ZAT) if you work in education. Or together with the midwife and maternity care if you work in birth care. Together you put all the information from the previous steps together and ask yourself: does the suspicion of domestic violence remain?

In the medical sector, it is mandatory to ask Safe Home for advice in step 4. But it is also advisable to take this step with Safe Home in the other sectors. Safe Home has the expertise and tools to make a safety and risk assessment, so make use of it.

Safe Home can think along at an early stage about the nature and seriousness of domestic violence and, for example, ask the right questions in step 2 to get a better picture of it.

'Safe Home can already ask in a consultation whether there is a repetition of violence. In that case, Safe Home thinks along at an earlier stage about the nature and seriousness of the situation and helps to weigh it up at an earlier stage.'
Safe Home Employee

#### **2. Bring all the information gathered together**

In step 4, you bring together the information that you have collected and documented in the previous steps. What signals have you received from the various family members? What did you put in the file about that? Who did you ask for advice, what did you come out of it and what did you do with it? What have you discussed with parents / the client / the child and what agreements have been made?

If desired, look at the themes [**Objective identification**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/objectief-signaleren/), [**Asking for advice**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/advies-vragen/) and [**Discussing concerns**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/zorgen-bespreken/) to assess whether you have all the collected information in order.

Include the story of the client/parents in your consideration. If possible, make the decision together.

'I always ask the parents and the children to rate the safety in their family. And if they give different figures, I take that into account too.'
District team employee

#### **3. Include conflicting information**

You also include conflicting information, for example, because the client and the caregiver or the parents and child do not tell the same story or because ex-partners say the opposite. It is not up to you as a professional to judge which information is correct.

'Children can show adapted behaviour, but if parents give contradictory signals or tell stories, that is also a signal.'
District team employee

You can read more information about dealing with parents in a complex divorce here: [**Firmly between the warring parties**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/scheiding-ouders-augeo-magazine-special/advies-staande-houden-in-de-strijd)

#### **4. Assess the nature and severity of the violence**

Questions that help estimate the nature and seriousness of the violence/neglect are:

* What is the age of the victim?
* To what extent are the victim and/or other family members dependent? And from whom?
* What is the nature of the violence or neglect? How common is it? When did it originate?
* What is the (expected) damage to different family members?
* To what extent is there isolation of the family?
* Which (other) risk factors are present? And what protective factors may offer weight against this?

'My situation was not so clear, but there was always a threat, very stressful. My children still suffer from this as adults. The social services thought it was all too light, because my ex downplayed it, and there were no signals from the children. So, the seriousness has not been sufficiently portrayed or has not weighed heavily enough.'
Experience expert

#### **5. Based on the assessment framework, determine whether there is acute or structural insecurity**

If, based on all the information, your suspicion of domestic violence remains, you then answer the question of whether there is structural or acute insecurity or disclosure (if someone tells about abuse or neglect). You do this based on the [**assessment framework**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/themas/meldcode/afwegingskader/) of your sector.

In [**Kompas Support Instrument for Signaling Domestic Violence and Child Abuse**](https://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2021/12/15/integraal-werken-in-de-wijk---kompas), you can map out the indications you have collected for acute or structural insecurity or disclosure from page 47.

#### **6. Use a valuation tool, if appropriate for your sector**

The risks that play a role now and, in the future, can be mapped out with risk assessment instruments. These instruments are mainly intended for employees in youth care, youth protection, social work and district teams.

You can read more information about which instrument can be used in which sector at what time to assess safety and risks in: [**Assessing safety and risks, what helps?**](https://www.nji.nl/sites/default/files/2021-05/Veiligheid-en-risicos-inschatten-wat-helpt.pdf)

#### **7. Has your suspicion been dispelled? Close the reporting code**

It is important to close the reporting code if, based on the information collected, you conclude that your suspicion of domestic violence has been removed. Write this down in the client's file as well. Write down factually and concretely that your suspicion has been removed, why that is the case and that you hereby close the reporting code. This is to prevent signals from continuing to haunt the client/family while they already appear to have been debunked.

As a focus officer, you play an important role in weighing the collected information together with your colleagues.

**3 tips for attention officers when weighing information**

#### **1. Pay attention to the words you use**

Weighing risks, assessing the severity and nature, assessing safety... all words that can make employees insecure. Because they feel that they can't do that, that they are not equipped for it, that they don't have enough expertise, and that they are not the right person to do that. That is why it is important to explain to employees what the purpose of this step is: to bring together the information from previous steps and to check whether the suspicion of domestic violence remains or has been removed. Emphasise that this is an assessment: most professionals do not have a complete picture of the family situation themselves; Other parties are needed to arrive at a more complete picture.

Advise your colleague to properly record all information in the file and discuss who will take which next steps.

#### **2. Shared vision on (in)security**

Safety and insecurity are terms that employees can understand different things by. It is important that there is a shared vision within the organization. Therefore, regularly discuss with each other what you mean by safety, what are signs of insecurity, and what you think is necessary to ensure safety.

'Stories of experience can help formulate a vision on domestic violence and insecurity. So, they should be shared more, so that organizations can make use of them.'
Attention Officer

#### **3. Go through the available information together**

Ideally, you take step 4 in a multidisciplinary meeting: it is better to assess different areas of expertise and perspectives. Sometimes that doesn't work, and you do that as a focus officer together with your colleagues. Safe Home also plays an important role in this.

How the purpose of the weighting is to answer the question of whether the suspicion of domestic violence continues to exist and then whether there is acute or structural insecurity or disclosure. So, ask questions that help to answer those questions.

**2 tips for organisations when weighing information**

#### **1. Make instruments available**

If there are tools for your organisation to assess safety and/or risks, make them available to employees.

An overview of the available instruments and by whom they can be used can be found at the NJI: [**Assessing safety and risks, what helps?**](https://www.nji.nl/sites/default/files/2021-05/Veiligheid-en-risicos-inschatten-wat-helpt.pdf)

Then enable your employees to work with it. That is, they must be trained and the instruments must be embedded in the registration systems and working method.

#### **2. Draw up a vision of safety together with the attention officer**

What do you mean by safety? What are possible signs of insecurity among your clients? Make sure that there is a vision of safety in your organisation and how your organisation's offer can contribute to this. Place this on your website as well, so that it is clear to clients and other professionals what you stand for.

### **7) To report or not to report?**

The name 'reporting code' misleads many people. Reporting is never the end in itself. And it is not for nothing that you first have to carefully go through all the previous steps. The reporting code is an instrument that you use to stop child abuse or domestic violence, preferably before it has even started. How do you deal with the decision to report or not to report?

If you have weighed all the information collected in step 4 and have come to the conclusion that your suspicion of domestic violence remains, substantiated by factual findings, you decide in step 5 whether a report is necessary and whether assistance is (also) possible.

**7 tips for professionals to better decide whether to report**

#### **1. Decide if a notification is necessary**

The first decision in step 5 is to answer the question: Is reporting necessary? If, on the basis of the assessment framework in step 4, you have assessed whether there is acute or structural insecurity or disclosure (if someone tells about abuse or neglect), you must report it to Safe Home. Together you will discuss what follow-up steps are needed.

* [**View sector-specific assessment framework ›**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/themas/meldcode/afwegingskader/)

Subsequently, whether together with Safe Home, you will examine to what extent it is (also) necessary to provide or organise effective help:

* Are you able to provide or organize effective help?
* Do those involved cooperate with the help offered?
* Does the help lead to sustainable safety and well-being for all those involved within the desired timeframe?

If the answer to 1 of these questions is 'no', then you (still) report to Safe Home.

'You are the care provider yourself, but if things don't go as expected, then it's up to you, even if the client doesn't want it. Apparently, you can't help solve the insecurity in the family yourself, so you need help from others. As a client, I will probably get angry at first, but I also want it to be safe again.'
Experience expert

#### **2. Include the client in the process before the decision**

If you have taken the tips from the previous themes to heart and you have included the client/parents in your considerations and steps from the first signal, it will generally take little effort in step 5 to explain that you think it is necessary to report to Safe Home and/or whether you (also) want to organize assistance.

'You can also explain that to parents - I see insecurity, can we work on that together? Then a report may not be necessary.'
Safe Home Employee

* [**See tips on how to notify parents about a report ›**](https://www.toolkitaandachtsfunctionaris.nl/nieuw2019/wp-content/uploads/2019/kennisbank/Ouders-informeren-over-melding-Veilig-Thuis-NHTC-2019.pdf)

#### **3. Give room to anger**

If you let your client know that you are going to make a report, give space to any emotions. Show understanding and allow your client to express his or her opinion. Then find out where the anger comes from and what it is about.

'Anger is often an expression of trauma and previous unpleasant experiences. It is important that you listen to them and do not let them put you off. Usually, people themselves know very well that help is needed, but they still find it difficult to acknowledge it.'
Employee district team

* [**Also check out the tips for the theme Discussing concerns ›**](https://www.augeo.nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/zorgen-bespreken/)

#### **4. Realise that you don't need permission**

You can report to Safe Home without the permission of the client/parents. There is a right to report for all professionals who fall under the Reporting Code Act. Even if you have professional secrecy. The condition is that you have carefully gone through all the steps of the reporting code. And that you have done that together with the family members as much as possible.

In principle, you always report to Safe Home with the knowledge of the client / the parents. This is to prevent you from acting 'behind your back': that can seriously damage your client's trust. Not only in you but in all the other professionals he/she has and will have to deal with.

* [**Read more about the legal right to report ›**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/wel-of-niet-melden/professionals/-/media/Files/Bibliotheek/Augeo-Wettelijk-Meldrecht.ashx)

#### **5. Make sure the client knows what is going to happen**

It is important for the feeling of trust in you and aid organizations that there are no open ends for the client. Make sure he/she knows what is going to happen by being as concrete as possible about it. And if you don't know exactly that you promise to find out and give feedback. Lack of clarity creates uncertainty, which can unnecessarily increase stress in a family.

#### **6. Make sure you know how to make a report**

Check what agreements there are within your organisation about reporting to Safe Home. Are you making a report in your own name? Or on behalf of the organisation? Do you have all the necessary information? Is the client informed? Etc. For such questions and good preparation, please contact your organisation's attention officer.

Also good to know: The way in which you have to make a report can differ per Safe Home. In most regions, Safe Home uses a report form, in other regions you call to make a report.

* [**More information about Safe Home working method ›**](https://veiligthuis.nl/hoe-werkt-veilig-thuis/)
* [**Location of Safe Home near you ›**](https://veiligthuis.nl/locaties/)

#### **7. Be proactive towards Safe Home**

*'You don't hear anything back from Safe Home'* is a frequently heard complaint from professionals in working with Safe Home. If you have made a report to Safe Home, you will always be told whether a report will be processed. If Safe Home itself enters into a conversation with a family, Safe Home provides feedback at the end of the intervention.

Do you think it is taking too long, or do you think Safe Home has forgotten that? Then contact us yourself. Be proactive if you find the progress unclear or if you have not received any feedback.

This also means that when you make a report, you clearly express your expectations to Safe Home, especially about the role you think Safe Home will play. Safe Home can then indicate whether that is realistic. And then you can also be clear about this to parents / the client.

**6 practical tips for attention officers about whether or not to report**

#### **1. Make sure your colleagues work with the client from the start**

The fear of having to report is a common obstacle for professionals. The most important recommendation is: to make sure that the cooperation with the client/parents is good. This means that professionals immediately present the first signals and minor concerns to the client/parents. This prevents you from experiencing a high threshold later in the process of having to tell them that a report to Safe Home is necessary.

As a focus officer, therefore insist to your colleagues that they are committed to good cooperation with parents at all times, from the first contact. You can read how to do this in the other themes of Wijzer met de meldcode.

#### **2. Make sure your colleagues know Safe Home**

Many Safe Home organisations offer to come and provide information to organisations in their region. For example, the Flevoland region has a Meldcode Tour. Ask Safe Home in your region about the possibilities. This increases awareness and lowers the threshold for calling in Safe Home. Another way to familiarise employees with the working method of Safe Home is by sharing the animation with them. For example, via a news item or by posting it on the intranet. This also shows your colleagues that they can always contact Safe Home themselves to ask for advice.

* [**Watch animation about the working method of Safe Home**](https://vimeo.com/727420303?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=179830191)
* [**Find the Safe Home location near you**](https://veiligthuis.nl/locaties/)

#### **3. Improve cooperation with Safe Home**

Experts cite several good examples to improve the cooperation between Safe Home and reporters, including:

* Safe Home can be found on location in various regions: an employee then holds consultation hours for reporters in the municipalities.
* In IJsselland an experiment is taking place in a number of municipalities of a weekly consultation between Safe Home and the local team about all reports of that week, with the central question: can the local team professional get started like this? Does he/she have enough information?
* In South Limburg, there are weekly triage tables with the district team in which all reports of that week are discussed face-to-face per municipality.

Check whether there are such initiatives for your region and join them if possible.

#### **4. Support your colleagues in making a decision and making a report**

It is important that your colleagues do not go through the reporting code alone but can ask you for advice and support. Therefore, make sure you are well aware of the questions included in the[**assessment framework**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/themas/meldcode/afwegingskader/)**.** Also, take a look at the information they have collected and the report they plan to make.

For more tips to support colleagues, you can also use the tips for professionals.

#### **5. Know how to make a 'safe report'**

You may estimate that the safety of the employee or that of a family member is endangered by a report to Safe Home. For example, because there are concrete threats, there are firearms in a household or because the victim talks about the risk of escalation. Then do not report alone, but report together with another party or discuss who can make the report. Consult with Safe Home about what safety arrangements can be made to make a report.

'Make a safety plan with the professionals involved - the community police officer, your manager, Safe Home - that also includes concrete solutions, such as making sure that you are at the exit of the room, that you have informed the community police officer and that you are not having the conversation with the family alone'
District team employee

An anonymous report, i.e. that the name of the reporter is not disclosed to the family, may also be possible.

'There is also a possibility at Safe Home to make a report anonymously. So, if the fear is great, if the threat is so great, discuss it at Safe Home. Then you can look for a solution together. Sometimes you come up with ways in which you can still make a safe report and sometimes it can be done anonymously. The Safe Home action protocol offers an opportunity for this.'
Safe Home Employee

#### **6. Ensure support from the board**

For working with the reporting code in general, it is important that you have support from the board to do so. In particular, it is important that the organisation stands behind its employees when making a report to Safe Home.

**Useful materials**

[**About Safe Home**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/themas/meldcode/veilig-thuis/)

[**Reporting code assessment framework**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/themas/meldcode/afwegingskader/)

[**Modules per sector for the assessment framework**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/themas/meldcode/opfrismodules/)

Conversation reports:
'To report or not to report?'

During various meetings prior to this campaign, a group of professionals, experts by experience, attention officers and Safe Home discussed solutions to dilemmas that may arise in practice.

[**Read the report of the conversation A**](https://www.augeo.nl/-/media/Files/Gespreksverslagen-WMDM/Gespreksverslag-3-v1.ashx)

[**Read conversation report B**](https://www.augeo.nl/-/media/Files/Gespreksverslagen-WMDM/Gespreksverslag-6-v1.ashx)

**2 tips for organizations to support employees in reporting or not reporting**

#### **Support your employees**

Professionals can find it exciting to have to make a report. For example, because they are afraid of complaints from the client or that clients will walk away. It is important as an organization to let employees know that you support them.

'If you experience that, that you have lost families after reporting or if a client goes out of contact, that does not contribute to starting a conversation next time. This plays a role among professionals. But withinour organization it is said very clearly: the fear of losing clients is no reason not to start the reporting code. That is very important.'
Mental health worker - sheltered housing

#### **Integrate the reporting code into your working method**

Make working with the reporting code practical and easy to implement for your employees. One way to facilitate this is, for example, by including the five steps as a pop-up in the registration system/file – this creates a clear internal route on how to go through the reporting code. This not only normalises working according to the steps of the reporting code but also ensures that collecting the information for a report to Safe Home takes little time.

'For example, we have updated the reporting code form and put in all the steps of the reporting code. If you then make a report, you have neatly documented everything step by step.'

### **8) Safety after a report**

In families where there is domestic violence, the first concern is: safety for all family members. This means that safety measures must be taken for each family member. And that all professionals involved keep an eye on whether safety recovers. Do you know your role in this?

**7 tips for ensuring safety for all family members**

#### **1. Everyone has a role to play in keeping an eye on safety**

Professionals often think that Safe Home or Youth Protection are the only ones responsible for keeping an eye on safety in a family. However, that is a misunderstanding: everyone who is involved in a family and with the individual family members has a role in it. After all, each party sees a part of the problems and of the family system; there is rarely anyone who has the total overview.

'People often point to us that youth care is there anyway and will solve it, but that makes us very lonely. We need others.'
Youth Protection Officer

#### **2. See what you can do in the meantime**

If you have made a report to Safe Home, it does not mean that help was immediately initiated the next day or that the problems were solved in the short term. Find out how you can play a role in increasing the safety of the family or one of the family members from your profession.

'When we make a report from school to Safe Home, we always discuss with our team what we can do for the student while the family is on the waiting list. For example, can the child stay at school more often after school? Which of the team members does he feel comfortable with? Or is there someone outside school who can give him extra support? As a school, we can mean a lot to our students.'
Education employee

Be aware that you too can be a part of the solution. For example, because you offer a safe place to the children at school, you as a debt counsellor help solve financial problems, and as a youth nurse you talk to parents about raising the children.

[**Read about the little things that can make a difference for children**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/door-de-ogen-van-jongeren-augeo-magazine-24/ervaringen-kleine-dingen-die-het-verschil-maken)**,** for example for their (sense of) safety.

#### **3. Know the safety arrangements**

To keep track of safety in the family, you must know whether and if so which safety agreements have been made with and for the family members. As a school, general practitioner or youth health care, it isalsoimportant to know what safety risks there are and what agreements have been made, so that you can take your part in them. Check which agreements apply to your role.

To make this possible for all those involved, experts believe that there should be a single point of contact for family members, the informal network and the professionals involved.

'There should be one case director who knows what everyone is doing, who is responsible for what and what the agreements are exactly. Where everyone can go if things are going well or not. So that you can check together whether it is becoming safer in a family'
Mental health employee

**Tips for creating a safety plan**

If you are a professional who draws up a safety plan with the family and makes safety agreements after Safe Home has drawn up safety conditions, see what can help you:
[**7 steps to creating a safety plan**](https://www.timmconsultancy.nl/in-7-stappen-een-goed-veiligheidsplan-maken/)

When making a safety plan, it is about 3 questions: Why? What? How?
[**View explanation of Safe Home East Gelderland**](https://www.veiligthuisnoordoostgelderland.nl/veiligheidsplan/)

Looking for an example?
[**View sample safety plan**](https://vng.nl/sites/default/files/20150612_voorbeeld_8_veiligheidsplan.pdf)

#### **4. Make safety a standard point of discussion with the family**

You can only keep an eye on safety by asking family members questions about safety. A common reason for forgetting to ask about safety in the family is that care providers immediately start working on 'their own part', on a specific area of life or with other questions that the client also has and violence and neglect fade into the background. Nevertheless, it is important that you keep asking about concrete situations of violence and neglect, about the agreements made in the safety plan to prevent those situations and whether those agreements are still relevant.

'All care providers involved can ask about safety. For example, the debt counsellor, who can say, you have debts, that often cause stress, how is that for you, and what does that do to safety? And so, all parties involved can ensure that this always remains a topic'
Employee district team

**A tip not to forget to ask about safety in your contact with the family is to put a pop-up in your report or as an alert in your appointment notification.**

When discussing safety, make sure you ask about concrete situations that prompted the report, for example how often family members yell at each other, what arguments consist of, whether there is a hit and by whom. In other words: who commits what violence, against whom, how often, when and with what effect on whom.

More information about mapping violence and neglect?[**Follow the mini-lecture**](https://www.augeo.nl/demo/R9_Gesprekshandreiking/gesprekshandreiking_thema_geweld_en_verwaarlozing_mini_college.html)**.**

#### **5. Discuss signs of insecurity immediately**

Many professionals find it difficult to discuss safety with family members. Just as for discussing signals and concerns with the client/parents, the following also applies discuss signals of insecurity directly, concretely and factually. Be curious about the story of the family members and ask questions.

'We all have a gut feeling and know best when there is safety and when to ask additional questions. That's something that plays in your heart, not in your head. Listen to your heart, it always beats. Youmust learntotrust that.'
Experience expert

You can read more tips under[**theme 5 Discussing concerns**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/zorgen-bespreken/)**.**

#### **6. Specifically for the district team: work on restoring safety**

Especially for professionals in the district team, safety must be a permanent point of attention in the families they have received through Safe Home. After all, insecurity is always an issue in those families. Moreover, it is good to realize that a family that comes through Safe Home does not necessarily have a request for help that you can start working on immediately as a care provider.

'The professional of the local team expects a client who has an intrinsic request for help and wants to work with it. Then they find it difficult if a client does not want to do it at all. And yes, that is more often the case with the clients we transfer from Safe Home.'
Safe Home Employee

Verbal transfer from Safe Home families to the district team is therefore important.

'Then you can discuss with each other: 'is this going to work this way and can you get started like this?'
Safe Home Employee

Good examples and tips:

* In order to ensure that the transfer between Safe Home and the district team runs smoothly, a Safe Home employee and the local team in the IJsselland region will make home visits together as much as possible after a report and in this way jointly start the guidance to the family.
* It is also recommended to draw up the safety plan together, so that it is not a 'Safe Home plan', but a jointly supported and feasible plan.
* Safe Home Helmond uses a format for the transfer to the district team, which explicitly includes the expectations for help.

More tips:

* [**Theme Case Transfer | Local network after Safe Home**](https://www.toezichtsociaaldomein.nl/onderzoeken-en-instrumenten/lokale-netwerk-na-veilig-thuis/themas-lnvt/casusoverdracht)
* [**Theme Safety | Local network after Safe Home**](https://www.toezichtsociaaldomein.nl/onderzoeken-en-instrumenten/lokale-netwerk-na-veilig-thuis/themas-lnvt/thema-veiligheid)

#### **7. (New) signs of insecurity? Report again!**

It is important that you report to Safe Home again if the insecurity in the family does not recover. This applies to all professionals involved in a family, but in particular to social workers who have been deployed to solve that insecurity.

'You are a social worker yourself, but things don't go as expected. Then it is up to you as a care provider and you have to report again. Apparently, you can't solve it yourself, because safety has not been restored.'
Experience expert

Safe Home's monitoring function means that it examines the safety situation of a family over a longer period of time. To do that properly, information from professionals who work with these families is needed. This includes re-reporting in the event of signs of insecurity.

As a focus officer, how do you support your colleagues in keeping an eye on safety in the families they work with? Read the tips and experiences of other focus officers here. And also check out the tips for attention officers for the other themes.

**4 tips for keeping an eye on safety for all family members**

#### **1. Have a shared vision of safety**

Safety is a comprehensive concept. What do the various employees mean by this? As a team and as an organization, do you have a shared vision of what safety and insecurity are? And what is your role in this? These are all questions that you, as a focus officer, can regularly discuss with colleagues to keep the subject sharp.

A valuable tip from an expert by experience is to have your colleagues reflect on how important safety is to them. In order to gain more insight into what you mean by it and how they can play a role in it for clients.

'Also ask yourself: the safety behind the front door, how important is that to you? Discuss that with each other. And then realize that if your safety at home is good, you can also develop better in other areas. If that is a topic of conversation with your colleagues, you may also dare to talk to clients earlier or more. That might help lower the threshold.'
Experience expert

#### **2. Share experience stories with your colleagues**

Stories of experience, from victims, perpetrators and bystanders, can help formulate a vision of domestic violence and safety. They should be shared more, find them and share them. Sterk Huis, for example, has collected a lot of[**experience stories**](https://www.sterkhuis.nl/ervaringsverhalen/). And the Netherlands Youth Institute (NJI) has made a special[**collection of 30 stories**](https://www.nji.nl/sites/default/files/2021-05/Bundeling-30-verhalen-Week-tegen-Kindermishandeling-%28mobiel%29.pdf)for the Week Against Child Abuse

#### **3. Support your colleagues**

As a focus officer, you are a source of information and advice, also when it comes to recognising (new) signs of insecurity and reporting (again). Moreover, you play an important role in helping your colleagues remember that they also have a role in keeping an eye on the safety of the families they work with. Ask about it regularly and ask about their signals, put the theme on the agenda of the team meeting and occasionally organise a meeting specifically about (in)safety.

* [**Ideas for creative knowledge sharing within your organization**](https://www.nji.nl/professionalisering/creatief-kennis-delen-in-de-organisatie)(NJI**)**

It is also important that your colleagues report again if safety in a family is not restored after a report to Safe Home or if there are new signals or concerns. Help them think about it or do it together. This is the only way Safe Home can monitor safety.

#### **4. Keep your own knowledge up to date**

Make sure you have sufficient knowledge. In any case, read the tips for professionals:

* [**Case transfer between Safe Home and the local network**](https://www.toezichtsociaaldomein.nl/onderzoeken-en-instrumenten/lokale-netwerk-na-veilig-thuis/themas-lnvt/casusoverdracht)**(Social Domain Supervision)**
* [**Working on safety by the local team**](https://www.toezichtsociaaldomein.nl/onderzoeken-en-instrumenten/lokale-netwerk-na-veilig-thuis/themas-lnvt/thema-veiligheid)**(Social Domain Supervision)**
* [**Working together on safety and recovery**](https://www.nji.nl/kindermishandeling/samen-werken-aan-veiligheid-en-herstel)**(NJI)**
* [**Working on safety in families**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/jeugdzorgspecial-werken-aan-veiligheid-in-gezinnen/werken-aan-veiligheid-in-gezinnen-augeo-magazine-jeugdzorg-special)**(Augeo Magazine)**
* [**Take the free course: Learning from calamities together**](https://www.augeo.nl/samen-leren-van-calamiteiten)

**3 tips for organisations about safety within families**

#### **1. Provide sufficient time and space for professional development**

All professionals have a role in monitoring and increasing safety in the families they work with. To increase that awareness, it is important that the theme of '(in)safety' is regularly on the agenda of employees. And that there is enough time and space available for this. Make sure that employees can follow training during working hours. For example, offer them a learning pot that includes time for training, which lowers the threshold for learning knowledge and skills and keeps them up-to-date. Regular attention to the subject during team meetings or time for case consultations is also helpful.

#### **2. Incorporate safety into the way of working**

* One way to remind employees that they are structurally paying attention to safety in the families they work with is a pop-up in the file.

#### **3. Ensure good cooperation in the region**

* Because no organisation can restore safety in a family on its own, cooperation with other agencies involved is crucial. Tips on how to improve cooperation in the region can be found in the [**Frustration Guide**](https://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2023/03/31/frustratiewijzer) and in [**the Guide with the reporting code**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/) under theme 11 Cooperation.

### **9) Fact or opinion**

In conversations about domestic violence, it is important to be concrete and factual. But dry facts alone will not get you there: a person-to-person conversation requires that you also take your feelings into account and contribute your opinion respectfully.
Facts, opinions and gut feelings can coexist, in the conversation and the reporting. But only if you clearly distinguish them from each other. This theme is about how to do that.

You have to take gut feelings seriously. But a 'feeling' is not a fact. How do you deal with this? How do you separate facts from opinions and what can you do if opinions differ?

**4 tips to distinguish facts from opinions as a professional**

#### **1. Be concrete and factual**

Facts are important in identifying and acting in the event of suspicions of domestic violence and child abuse. Facts can be checked, are concrete and cannot be refuted. Both in the conversations with those involved and in your file management, you use relevant and objective information that you present in a concrete way and without judgment.

An objective description is an exact description of what you observe. And if that applies to a literal quote of what someone says or does. For example: *'Teun speaks negatively about his older brother ("He hits me when I get in the way, and he calls me 'sucker' instead of Teun complains about his brother and hates him")'*. You can follow a factual, objective description with your own (subjective) interpretation. For example: *'I'm worried about that'*. Stick to the following rule: First give an objective description of what you see and only then a subjective finding.

More information about objective signalling can be found under[**theme 3 of Wijzer met de meldcode**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/objectief-signaleren/)**.**

#### **2. Take your (gut) feeling seriously**

Facts alone will not get you there in tackling domestic violence. If only because signalling domestic violence usually starts with the feeling 'that something is not quite right' – the so-called gut feeling or not right. It is important to take that feeling seriously, in all subsequent steps.

Find out where that feeling comes from and try to put it into words. What happens in your body? And in your head? To do this, you need to know yourself well, be able to take your feelings seriously and use this in your contact with those involved. Only then can you have a person-to-person conversation with your client / the parents.

'Professionals are too busy in their heads because they want to solve a crisis. They don't dare to listen to their feelings. You have to know yourself well to be able to use your gut feeling.'
Experience expert

'Realize that you are your compass – training helps, but that will get you in your head. And away from your feelings. So I advocate self-knowledge in every professional and the courage to listen to your heart because it always beats.'
Experience expert

It is important that you are not judgmental in your contact with those involved, but rather curious about the other person's vision. It is also important that you do not take your own norms and values as the general norm: this not only takes you away from the facts, but you are also insufficiently open to the other person's story.

#### **3. Record everything carefully in the file**

It is important to carefully record all the information you collect in the file. Good factual reporting of observed signals, of the steps taken and of the results thereof is an important basis for careful action. Especially when it comes to suspicions of domestic violence and child abuse, it is important to involve the family members, so that they know what has been written about them and nothing has been arranged or said behind their backs.

In file management, you make sure that you separate facts and opinions. You can record what you think about something, as long as it is clear that it is your opinion. The same applies to suspicions, hypotheses and assumptions: if you include them in the file, you explicitly state the type of information involved. Also, make a follow-up note if it's later confirmed or invalidated. This way you keep the file up-to-date and traceable.

Especially in complex or less obvious situations, it is important to register as much as possible early on. The sooner you write down 'small' signals factually and concretely, the sooner you will get clarity about a case. In the beginning, it may take you a little more time, if it turns out that a follow-up is necessary, you have your file in order and it takes less time to transfer it to, for example, Safe Home or social services.

Practice with the help of this video from a GP with careful file keeping**:**[**Documenting in the reporting code**](https://lvak.nl/nieuws/archief/2020/video_documenteren_in_de_meldcode)**.**

The[**online tool 'In conversation about reporting code dilemmas'**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/gesprekshandreiking/)includes an exercise on separating facts and opinions. Do this together with a colleague, the attention officer or as a team.

Another advantage of a complete and factual file is that it allows you to justify your actions. Moreover, good reporting contributes to the continuity of care: a replacement or successor knows exactly what isgoing on and what has been done. You also benefit from making a report to Safe Home, because all the information is together.

#### **4. Learn with and from each other**

Many professionals find it difficult to consistently separate facts and opinions, both in conversations and on paper. That's why it's important to keep practising that. Do that, for example, in a work meeting and ask a colleague more often: *'I see this and this. How would you put that?'* This way you can keep each other on your toes and train together how to discuss this with clients/parents and how to write it down in the file or, for example, in the report form.

'You can also learn that from each other. Ask a colleague who is good at that: How do you write that? Would you like to take a look with me?'
Education employee

'Let your client also watch, that forces you to separate facts from opinions – and to check whether you have written down your observation correctly. So that others in the chain can also continue with your reporting.'
Youth Protection Officer

As an attention officer, you play an important role in supporting your colleagues in distinguishing facts and opinions, both in conversation and in the written word.

**4 tips for attention officers when distinguishing facts or opinions**

#### **1. Emphasize the importance of accurate reporting**

Make sure your colleagues know how important it is to register carefully and what they record in which way and where. Good factual reporting of observed signals, of the steps taken and of the results thereof is an important basis for careful action. Especially when it comes to suspicions of domestic violence and child abuse, it is important to involve the family members, so that they know what has been written about them and nothing has been arranged or said behind their backs.

Moreover, with a complete and factual file, you can justify your actions. Good reporting contributes to the continuity of care: a replacement or successor knows exactly what is going on and what has been done. Moreover, you benefit from reporting to Safe Home, because all the information is together.

#### **2. Make knowledge available**

* The website handelingsprotocol.nl describes the points of attention for file formation for various sectors, for example in:[**File formation in education**](https://www.handelingsprotocol.nl/utrecht-vo-stap-1-signaleren-3/dossiervorming)
* Practice with careful record-keeping based on this video from a GP**:**[**Documenting in the reporting code**](https://lvak.nl/nieuws/archief/2020/video_documenteren_in_de_meldcode)
* The[**online conversation tool**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/gesprekshandreiking/)**includes an exercise on separating facts and opinions. You can do this with your team or have team members do it individually.**

#### **3. Support colleagues in separating facts from opinion**

You are not only a source of information for your colleagues when it comes to pointing out signals or advising on the next steps, but also for supporting them in file management. Take a look at how they do it and show how you do it yourself.

Especially when it comes to a situation in which family members accuse each other or tell contradictory stories, it is important to coach your colleagues in conducting conversations and to help include both views in the file.

If there are mutual accusations in a family, it is extra difficult to get the facts out of the way. In the case '*What if divorced parents contradict each other?'* from the[**conversation tool**](NULL)**,** you can reflect with your team or partners on how you can deal with this.

#### **4. Organise feedback**

Learning from each other is a good way to increase expertise in the organisation. One way to better equip your colleagues for conversation is InterVision and peer consultation. Invest in a culture in your organization in which colleagues give and ask each other for feedback, ask each other to have conversations together and learn from each other.

A buddy system can also be a good way to ensure that colleagues learn from each other and that expertise in the organisation grows. You can do this by having an experienced employee take a new employee under his or her wing. Watching a senior, getting advice and practising together helps the junior, especially with having conversations.

**3 tips for organisations to better distinguish facts or opinions**

#### **1. Provide an accessible registration system**

Professionals often indicate that it takes a lot of time to register. It is important to register carefully in all steps of the reporting code. Check whether there is a way to make it easier for your employees to keep the file up to date. One way may be to implement the[**signal map**](https://signalenkaart.nl/)**.**

#### **2. Make sure the attention officer has enough time**

The attention officer also has an important role in careful reporting. Supporting colleagues in this takes time. It is therefore important that this task is also included in the job description and that time is reserved for it.

#### **3. Facilitate training of your employees**

Employees must feel that 'the organisation' has the reporting code high on the agenda and facilitates working with the reporting code. This is mainly expressed by making time and space available for the attention officers to do their work and for increasing the knowledge of your employees about all parts of the reporting code and therefore also file management.

Training on the reporting code and domestic violence should be mandatory for all employees.

'Structural attention to the subject only works if employees are allowed to follow training during working hours. A learning pot with time for training could be a possibility. And including training in induction programs too.'

Other ways in which you can facilitate employees as an organization are to offer time for setting up a buddy system so that employees can learn from each other, for organising InterVision and for case discussions. All ways in which employees can learn with and from each other.

### **10) Sharing and requesting information**

Professionals experience many barriers when it comes to exchanging information. However, for an effective and efficient approach to domestic violence and child abuse, it is indispensable to share information with other parties. Two rules of thumb are paramount: make sure your goal is sound and do it in consultation with your client / the parents. How? The following tips from the field are about this.

Don't do it alone, is an important principle of the reporting code. An important reason for this is that each party involved only sees a small part of the family. Read the tips on exchanging information here.

**6 tips for sharing or requesting information as a professional**

#### **1. Work with the client/parents from the start**

The most important thing you need to know about data exchange is: if you have permission from family members involved (adults and children from the age of 12), you may share information with third parties. If you work closely with the client/parents from the beginning, it will be less difficult to explain why you want to exchange information with other professionals. If you can explain to family members with whom you want to exchange what information and why you want to do so, they will be more likely to agree.

In addition to asking permission to share certain information, you can also ask your client / the parent’s what information they think is relevant to share with another party.

'The client can then also add information that you did not yet have. After all, he or she is an expert on his or her own situation. And can also prevent you from sharing wrong or irrelevant information.'
Experience expert

Read more about asking for permission in paragraph 1.2 of[**Van Montfoort's Legal Information Sheet**](https://www.wijkteamswerkenmetjeugd.nl/files/tool_files/vanmontfoort_het_delen_van_informatie.pdf)on sharing information (source: Wijkteams werken met jeugd).

#### **2. Make sure you know what is allowed**

Even if you do not get permission, it is possible to share information. If you want to do that, you must make a careful assessment. The first step is to check whether there is a basis for exchanging information. The client's consent is a basis, but also a 'legitimate interest', such as the use of the reporting code. Also read: **'**[**What are the principles for sharing information?'**](https://www.toezichtsociaaldomein.nl/onderzoeken-en-instrumenten/informatie-delen/vraag-en-antwoord/welke-grondslagen-zijn-er-om-informatie-te-delen-en-wanneer-kan-ik-mijn-beroepsgeheim-doorbreken)from Supervision of the Social Domain

Other questions you ask yourself to make a careful assessment are:

* What is the purpose of sharing information?
* Is sharing information (breaking privacy) proportionate to the goal?
* Can the goal be achieved in another way? For example, by asking for anonymous advice.

If you decide to share information, you inform the client/parents about this, and even if they did not give permission, you motivate the reason for sharing information and record your considerations in the file.

'You are more likely to have to explain something that if you don't do something than if you do something. As long as you explain and record what you do and what your considerations are.'
General practitioner

What do you know about sharing information?[**Take the Knowledge Test**](https://www.augeo.nl/demo/qurve/informatie/)

Even if you know the GDPR and Youth Act by heart, you may still have doubts about the application of the rules on information sharing. In[**this article**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/samenwerken-augeo-magazine-18/7-tips-omgaan-met-privacy)**,** Esther Lam, a legal expert in the field of youth, explains in 7 tips what she thinks is important to know.

#### **3. Only share information that you have expertise in**

It is important to share factual information and only information that fits within your expertise. As an education professional, for example, you can share information about how a child is doing at school, how he behaves, and how the contact with parents is, but not answer the question of whether a parent has a psychiatric disorder or an addiction – that is the expertise of the mental health service.

Even if another party requests information from you that does not fall within your expertise, you indicate this and, if necessary, refer to the party that does have that information.

Keep in mind that you only exchange relevant information and no more than necessary. This means that you only provide information that is important for taking follow-up steps. Which information you exchange therefore depends on the party with whom you do so and at which step of the reporting code

#### **4. Do warm transfer**

A warm transfer is very common in some sectors: that is, the care of a family is transferred in consultation with, or in the presence of, the family. A warm transfer ensures that everyone knows exactly who has what information. In some regions, for example, this happens between Safe Home and the local team. It is also more common in birth care.

'We have a standard transfer moment after 12 weeks, to the consultation office and the GP. We also include the client in this. That's never a problem, because we just talk about it and explain why we do it.'
Midwife

#### **5. Have information checked**

To prevent you from sharing incorrect information, misunderstanding it or having incomplete information, it is recommended that you have the information provider check whether you have written it down correctly.

'Is what I wrote here correct? Can you agree to this? It is useful to ask both your client and the chain partner from whom you have received information. Then the files also match each other.'
Employee district team

#### **6. Be careful with anonymous consultations**

If you have tried everything to get permission and that has not worked, it is also possible to consult anonymously. However, be careful with that.

'People start speculating about which family it is, sometimes know that and before you know it it is no longer anonymous. Or it leads to confusion of people, because you think you know who it's about, but it's about someone else and then you're accidentally talking about the wrong person.'
Employee district team

As a focus officer, you have an important role in supporting your colleagues in information exchange. Read tips from others here.

**4 practical tips for attention officers when sharing and requesting information**

#### **1. Discuss the rules regarding information exchange regularly with your colleagues**

The most important rules of thumb for sharing information are to make sure that the purpose for which you want to share information matches the content of the information and coordinate with the client what you want to share with whom for what reason. Motivate your colleagues from the first contact with the client/parents to be clear about what information they want to share with whom and why they want to do so. If the client understands why, it is important to exchange certain information, he will be more likely to agree.

With the permission of family members involved (adults and children from the age of 12), you may share information with third parties. It is important that you only share information that is important to be able to take the next steps. If family members do not give permission, it is important to inform your colleagues that in certain circumstances they may still share information with third parties, provided that they make a careful assessment and carefully record it in the file.

'As long as you record what you do well, much more is allowed than we think. Make sure that everyone in your organization is aware of this and that the steps of the reporting code are properly recorded.'
Attention Officer

**More practical examples:**

* Read the[**tips for professionals**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/informatie-delen/professionals/)
* Visit the theme page[**Information sharing**](https://www.toezichtsociaaldomein.nl/onderzoeken-en-instrumenten/lokale-netwerk-na-veilig-thuis/themas-lnvt/informatie-delen)of Social Domain Supervision

#### **2. Make knowledge available**

To reduce the uncertainty of your colleagues about information exchange, it is important to make knowledge available. For example, put the following references on your intranet, or share them in another way:

* [**Principles for sharing information**](https://www.toezichtsociaaldomein.nl/onderzoeken-en-instrumenten/informatie-delen/vraag-en-antwoord/welke-grondslagen-zijn-er-om-informatie-te-delen-en-wanneer-kan-ik-mijn-beroepsgeheim-doorbreken)
* [**7 tips on dealing with privacy**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/samenwerken-augeo-magazine-18/7-tips-omgaan-met-privacy)
* [**Tips on sharing information when parents are divorced**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/scheiding-ouders-augeo-magazine-special/uitgelegd-informatie-delen)
* [**Test your knowledge about sharing information**](https://www.augeo.nl/demo/qurve/informatie/)

#### **3. Organise feedback**

Learning from each other is a good way to increase expertise in the organisation. One way to reduce the uncertainty of your colleagues about sharing information is InterVision and peer consultation. In your organisation, invest in a culture in which colleagues give and ask each other for feedback, ask each other to see how they have recorded information in the file and want to learn from each other.

A buddy system can also be a good way to ensure that colleagues learn from each other and grow expertise in the organization. You can do this by having an experienced employee take a new employee under his or her wing. Watching a senior, getting advice and practising together certainly helps the junior to learn to deal carefully with sharing information with third parties.

#### **4 Practice sharing information with each other**

Sharing information often happens in a conversation. You can also practice that with your colleagues. In the first place, it is about how you, as professionals, can ask permission from the client/parents to share information. In addition, it can help your colleagues practice exchanging information with other professionals. What exactly do you say, how do you say it, and what should you pay attention to? If employees can practice among themselves, their uncertainty will decrease.

**Tip: occasionally bring in a statement about sharing information during the work meeting. For example, from the**[**LVAK Reporting Code Statement Game**](https://lvak.nl/shop/)**.**

What can you do as an organization to reduce the uncertainty of employees around sharing information?

**2 tips for organisations about sharing and requesting information**

#### **1. Empower your employees**

Convey that an important principle of the reporting code is that you work together with family members and with other professionals. No single party can tackle domestic violence alone. To be able to do that effectively, information exchange is necessary. As an organisation, propagate that information must be shared and support your employees in this.

'In the workplace, you would like to share information and then it is not allowed from above. It is necessary that you get support from your board and that your decision to share information is supported.'
Care worker

#### **2. Provide sufficient time and space for professional development**

To reduce the uncertainty surrounding the exchange of information from employees, it is important that there is sufficient time to learn about it. Make sure they can follow training during working hours. For example, offer them a learning pot that includes time for training, which lowers the threshold for learning knowledge and skills and keeps them up-to-date. Regular attention to the subject during team meetings or time for case consultations is also helpful.

### **11) Cooperate**

To tackle domestic violence effectively, cooperation is necessary: no one party can do it alone. But how do you do that? Read the tips from practice here.

Collaborating with other parties is important, but it is also easier said than done. How do you work together effectively in the different steps of the reporting code? Read the tips from other professionals here.

**8 tips for and by professionals about efficient collaboration**

#### **1. Take the cooperation with the client/family as a starting point**

The cooperation with the family is paramount. That makes it easier for the client/family.

'Clients don't like to tell their story over and over again. Being confronted with what is not going well is not helpful. An idea to do that differently is to have a conversation with different disciplines together, with the client present, in which the client tells his or her story once.
Experience expert

In addition, it is important to realise that the necessary information for cooperation with chain partners can only be collected in consultation with the client/patient. Therefore, prepare a consultation with chain partners or a multidisciplinary consultation (MDC) with the family members involved.

'At the start, we sit down with the parents and discuss who is involved and who we want to sit around the table. It is important that agreements are made, that it is clear who is responsible for what and that it is also addressed.'
Youth care employee

Questions such as: 'What do you want to be discussed?' or 'What is your wish for the future?' are also important to ask and to record the answers in the file.

#### **2. Keep it small and practical**

Cooperation must also be properly arranged at the organizational level, but as a professional, you can arrange a lot yourself when it comes to working with and around the family. Therefore, make sure you know who is involved with the family. It is important that the parties are aware of each other's involvement and know how to find each other if necessary. Sit down with each other, including the family, and then decide together who will be in control and what that entails.

'Not every professional needs to have the same information, but knowing each other's involvement is important.'
General practitioner

'Come together again after 6 weeks and see what has been achieved of the goals. Not at the organizational level and from above determine who should do what, but look at what is best for each case.'
Employee district team

A method to jointly make an analysis and assistance plan of and with a family where the safety of children is at stake is the[**SAAF (Safeguarding children Assessment and Analysis Framework).**](https://www.nji.nl/kindermishandeling/assessmentdriehoek-en-zevenstappenmodel)

#### **3. Get to know each other**

You make contact with each other as a person, not as an organisation. Therefore, invest in getting to know the people you work with.

'Make sure you see each other, even if it's digitally, then you have a face to it. And: make sure you know what you have to offer each other.'
Youth nurse

It is important to make yourself visible, both inside and outside the organisation. Therefore, invest in making contact with parties with whom you would like to work more.

'In my region, for example, I visit GPs as much as possible, so that they are more likely to think about sharing information with the paediatrician.'
Paediatrician

Read the article **'**[**This is how collaboration really works**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/special-huisartsenzorg/reportage-huisartsen-wijkteam-en-veilig-thuis-weten-elkaar-sneller-te-vinden-bij-kindermishandeling)**'**, in which a general practice, community team, Safe Home and a primary care organisation explain what they did to work together more effectively in the event of suspicions of domestic violence.

#### **4. Know who's what**

Make sure you know what the tasks and responsibilities of your chain partners are and your own. And that you can explain that to families.

Read how the cooperation is arranged in the[**Child Protection Measures protocol around birth**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/onderzoeksspecial-nieuwe-inzichten-betere-resultaten/protocol-uhp-geboortezorg)**.**

In[**the Frustration Guide**](https://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2023/03/31/frustratiewijzer)you can read tips and information to improve cooperation in domestic violence. Among other things, about directing and knowing what your partners are doing.

#### **5. Be open and transparent**

There is no general method or direction for smooth cooperation. You must find your own way, but above all you are open and transparent with each other.

'If it doesn't work, internally or externally, make it negotiable immediately. That lowers the threshold.'
Childcare employee

When it comes to working together in a case, it is also important to make explicit what you expect from the other person.

'The processes of the district team and Safe Home must be in line with each other, but that is not always the case. The mutual expectations, who has what role and the agreements with the client are not always clear. So, it is important to express this well to each other
Employee district team

#### **6. See what you can do yourself**

If there is a waiting list for help, the other parties involved mustn't wait.

'It is so important for a family that you don't wait for the designated person to take action, because the family will suffer as a result. See what you can do for a family. Where else do I stay and where do my children stay? Then I don't know what to do anymore.'
Experience expert

It may then be necessary to 'colour outside the lines' and be 'disobedient' to show what is needed to create change.

'Come up with practical examples of how it can be done, think in terms of opportunities and solutions, even if it doesn't exactly fit within the framework.'
Employee district team

[**Read the interview with Robin Bremekamp**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/samenwerken-augeo-magazine-18/interview-robin-bremekamp)about when collaboration is necessary and when it is not.

#### **7. Know each other's language**

To be able to work well together, you don't necessarily have to speak each other's language, but you do have to be able to understand each other. Especially when it comes to specific words, such as urgency, security or crisis, it happens that different parties understand something differently. This confuses and can lead to wrong expectations.

'Words such as urgency, crisis, Safe House employees and employees of a local team often have different images of that. Yes, and then an employee of a local team expects action from Safe Home and Safe Home has a different opinion about it and then friction arises. So be clear exactly what you mean, what you are going to do yourself and what you expect from the other person.'
Safe Home Employee

#### **8. Collaborate with the informal network**

As a professional, you are temporarily involved with a family. Family members, neighbours, friends and acquaintances generally stay longer in the life of a family. Therefore, work together with the social network of families from the beginning – this will help you organise long-term support.

* [**Guide: Effective collaboration with the informal network**](https://www.kennisplatformsdnh.nl/documenten/handlerdownloadfiles.ashx?idnv=2228235)
* [**The importance of social support**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/sociale-steun-augeo-magazine-19/sociale-steun)

As a focus officer, you help your colleagues to work efficiently with other organisations involved. Read practical tips here.

**4 tips for attention officers to improve collaboration**

#### **1. Make sure your colleagues know who is who**

Your colleagues must know which organisations are active in your region in tackling domestic violence. A (digital) social map that is available via the intranet can provide a lot of insight. For example, there is the[**national social map**](https://landelijk.socialekaartnederland.nl/)in which you can search by theme and region. In many places, regional social maps are available, such as in IJsselland.

It is also important to know what the various organisations do, in other words: which party has which tasks and responsibilities. This applies at the case level, but this information is also indispensable at the organisational level. If there are chain partners with whom you often work, it is advisable to organise a look behind the scenes. This lowers the threshold for visiting each other if necessary.

#### **2. Seek cooperation with Safe Home**

Invest in contact with Safe Home. Get to know each other. For example, if you invite Safe Home for information, Safe Home can respond to the questions that arise in the organisation. Or do so together with other attention officers from the region.

'We have invested in the collaboration with Safe Home and attention officers from various organisations so that it is clearer what to expect from Safe Home and when to knock on the door for what. Knowing and being able to find each other better, through the attention officers, increases each other's expertise and 'don't do it alone' adage.'
Attention Officer

#### **3. Evaluate case histories with each other**

Evaluate a case at the collaboration level with each other. How did it go, what went well, could we have involved someone earlier? Here you will find more information and tools for[**evaluating cases together**](https://vng.nl/sites/default/files/2021-01/hoofdstuk-6-evalueren.pdf)**.**

In Rotterdam, the pilot[**Learning Together against domestic violence**](https://www.hgleerwerkplaats.nl/)is running. Here you will find more information about, for example, case reflection meetings or about learning from each other around specific themes.

#### **4. Have board support**

Support from the board is needed to work together with chain partners and to make agreements with each other. If necessary, convince the board of the importance of cooperation and indicate what you need from them to arrange cooperation agreements with other parties. It is important that the organization conveys that cooperation is necessary, takes action to organize it and stands behind its employees.

For more inspiration, read the portraits of an experienced expert, a general practitioner and two process directors in which they share frustrations and tips to improve cooperation with others:[**Working together in tackling domestic violence and child abuse**](https://www.nji.nl/kindermishandeling/samenwerken-bij-de-aanpak-van-huiselijk-geweld-en-kindermishandeling)**.**

To ensure that professionals can work well together at the case level, it is important that organisations organise and facilitate this properly. Read the tips from practice here.

**3 tips for organisations when working together**

#### **1. Show what you're into**

Not only internally it must be clear 'what we are of', it is also important for clients and families. For example, describe that you work with the reporting code and that from the first contact, you have an eye for safety as a standard part of your work. The aim is to organise or offer help, and together see what is needed. By being open and normalising, the load becomes less heavy. Also, describe what you have to offer clients when it comes to help after domestic violence and child abuse. And of course, show that in your actions.

#### **2. Arrange multidisciplinary consultations**

One way to make standard use of each other's expertise is to bring case histories into standard multidisciplinary meetings, which take place weekly, for example.

'Guarantee that, so that you are not dependent on people from a specific organisation, but that the consultation is embedded by default'
Police officer

#### **3. Focus on a regional approach**

Cooperation is necessary to be able to offer effective help to families affected by domestic violence. It is the responsibility of the municipality to have insight into what is needed in terms of help and to ensure that there is an appropriate offer of help in the local network. As an organization, you can also play a role in this towards the municipality.

**Good examples and tips from practice:**

* [**Help from the local network: Theme Appropriate Help**](https://www.toezichtsociaaldomein.nl/onderzoeken-en-instrumenten/lokale-netwerk-na-veilig-thuis/themas-lnvt/passende-hulp)**(Supervision Social Domain)**
* [**Not working together because you have to, but because it helps**](https://www.zonmw.nl/nl/nieuws/niet-samenwerken-omdat-het-moet-maar-omdat-het-helpt)**(ZonMw)**
* [**Effective collaboration: Working according to the method 1 Family, 1 Director, 1 Plan**](https://www.augeomagazine.nl/aan-de-slag-met-kennis-augeo-magazine-onderzoeksspecial/1-gezin-1-plan-1-regisseur-aanpak-huiselijk-geweld-en-kindermishandeling-in-lokale-jeugd-teams)**(Augeo Magazine)**
* [**Principles of 1G1P1R from practice**](https://www.toezichtsociaaldomein.nl/onderzoeken-en-instrumenten/lokale-netwerk-na-veilig-thuis/themas-lnvt/1gezin1plan1regisseur)**(Social Domain Supervision)**

### **12) Violence against adults**

Domestic violence takes place behind the front door. Not only children but also adults can be victims of this. How do you deal with this as a professional, attention officer or organisation? Check out the tips.

**6 Tips for Professionals on Domestic Violence Against Adults**

**1. Increase your knowledge about elder abuse and intimate partner violence**

**Knowledge about (the prevention of) domestic violence is a prerequisite for being able to identify it. 'You only see it when you believe it' is a well-known statement for a reason. If you do not know that domestic violence is common and that you may also have to deal with adult victims and perpetrators in your work, it is difficult to recognise and let alone start a conversation with your client about it.**

**'For many, it's a distant memory: I don't see it, so it's not there. And if you haven't come across any serious forms of elder abuse, how can you recognise the smaller, more subtle forms?'
Nursing home employee**

**Do you want more figures, possible signals and risk factors? Check out the following factsheets:**

* [**Factsheet (ex-)partner violence**](https://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl/vormen/partner-en-ex-partnergeweld/publicaties/factsheets/2018/11/01/ex-partnergeweld)
* [**Elder abuse and derailed informal care**](https://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl/vormen/ouderenmishandeling-en-ontspoorde-mantelzorg)
* [**Financial abuse of the elderly**](https://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl/vormen/financieel-misbruik/publicaties/factsheets/2018/11/01/financieel-misbruik)
* [**Reporting code for derailed informal care**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/geweld-tegen-volwassenen/professionals/-/media/Files/Bibliotheek/Meldcode-Ontspoorde-mantelzorg.ashx)

Better understand why victims of intimate partner violence do not leave their partner.[**Check out this TedX by Leslie Steiner**](https://www.ted.com/talks/leslie_morgan_steiner_why_domestic_violence_victims_don_t_leave)**.**

**2. Realise that adults can also be dependent and vulnerable**

For some healthcare professionals, clients' responsibility is paramount. Clients have a request for help, have complaints that they want to get rid of and have to take action themselves to get rid of them. Too much emphasis on personal responsibility means that as a professional you do not pay enough attention to the fact that adults can also be vulnerable and dependent on a family member. Especially when there is violence and oppression in the domestic circle, many adults are unable to stand up for themselves decisively. A proactive attitude from you as a professional is crucial.

'I understand the hesitation of professionals to ask about my relationship and home situation. But I also want to get rid of my complaints. Especially if I visit the physiotherapist more often and there is a link between my complaints and stress at home, then you have to ask about it, because I won't be bringing it up myself. And then I might get angry about such a question, but then I feel seen.'
Experience expert

In addition, a barrier is that the idea prevails that adults are always mentally competent, that a victim apparently chooses this situation and a couple always gets back together anyway.

The experience expert says about too much emphasis on mental capacity:

'Because of the stress, your brain no longer works as well, so usually victims are not very competent at all. They do not oversee what is going to happen. They know what they have and not where they are going. They have no perspective, so if you say you're going to make a report, you have to explain and give perspective.'
Experience expert

**3. Take the time for a conversation**

According to the experts in the field, lack of time should not be a reason not to start the conversation about signals. See how you can use the available time efficiently.

'Make better use of the time with your client. In the time you normally spend on small talk, ask how the client is doing and then have a genuine interest in the answer.'
Home care employee

Although it is not self-evident for many healthcare professionals to ask about the client's relationship or home situation, it is important to do so. Older people in particular are not used to talking about their feelings. Or about what they find difficult. Maybe they don't want to complain or be vulnerable. It is therefore important to start the conversation yourself.

An important condition is that you also take the time to listen attentively.

'That question about how I was doing was never asked. And when it was asked, I ran empty. It is only important that it is a sincere question. And not a question on a checklist, because then I still don't feel taken seriously.'
Experience expert

As a professional, you often already have an idea of how things are, what the relationship between the caregiver and your client is like, or the relationship between partners. Maybe you already have an explanation for the situation, you have already filled in what cause and effect are. Or what needs to be done and what solutions you need to come up with. All these thoughts and ideas raise the threshold to listen to your client openly and without prejudice.

**4. Realise that you can't solve the situation all at once**

Domestic violence is a complex problem that does not stop overnight. Your involvement will also generally not immediately lead to a permanent solution. More is needed for that. Yet you can play an important role in the lives of family members.

'As doctors, we are the party that recognises that a conversation with the patient strengthens the relationship. Perhaps just by listening you can mean a lot as a doctor. So don't be afraid that you have tosolve it alone, but have the conversation.'
General practitioner

And sometimes just listening carefully is enough.

'You don't have to find the solution in 1 conversation. Just by listening you get a lot of information that you can use to move forward. But more important than that is that the client feels heard and taken seriously.'
Experience expert

A next step can then be to find a solution together.

'It is so important to find a solution together with the client. It would have helped me if I had learned that in the training, that it is okay to sit back a bit, that you don't have to come up with a solution for the client right away.'
Addiction care employee

More tips for a conversation with your client can be found under theme5[**Discussing concerns**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/zorgen-bespreken/)**.**

**5. Focus on the prevention of elder abuse**

If you work with elderly people who have an informal caregiver, also involve the informal caregiver in the anamnesis and ask questions such as: what does the illness mean for the care you provide, are there any problems, what is it like for you? In addition, it is important to provide good information to the informal caregiver about the possible consequences of the diagnosis on the behaviour and health of the client, so that he or she is well prepared for what may come and what can be done to prevent problems.

'Have a conversation with the people involved about how the contact between them is and remains fun and positive. And about what gives them both energy. That's so important.'
Safe Home Employee

Also pay attention to properly mapping and strengthening the social network, both of the client and of the informal caregiver. The social network plays an important role in preventing future problems.

6. Realize that you can report adults to Safe Home

You can report (suspected) domestic violence against an adult to Safe Home. Even if no children are involved. And also, if an adult indicates that he/she does not want that. However, more restraint is required than in the case of suspicions of child abuse. After all, an adult has the right to self-determination.

It is important to first find out why your client does not want you to report. After all, it may be that the refusal stems from fear of the suspected perpetrator or that there is a high degree of dependence – in which case there is no question of a well-considered and freely made choice. Then contact Safe Home and discuss together what steps to take. Making a report can then be a solution. You can also discuss what help you can organize and how you can continue to offer support yourself.

How do you support your colleagues in identifying and tackling domestic violence against adults? Read the tips from others here.

**5 practical tips for focus officers on violence against adults**

**1. Make knowledge available**

Disbelief that it occurs plays a role in elder abuse: especially in the case of serious forms or sexual abuse, we quickly think that the elderly do not experience it.

'It's a far-from-my-bed show: I've never seen it, so it doesn't exist. And if you don't recognize any serious forms of elder abuse, how can you pick up the smaller, more subtle signals?'
Home care employee

Figures on domestic violence can increase the awareness of employees.

'You can better apply the focus on domestic violence in your organization if employees are aware of how often it occurs. So, share figures, then employees may be more inclined to act.'
Experience expert

[**The Knowledge Card (ex-)partner violence**](https://www.movisie.nl/sites/movisie.nl/files/2023-03/Kenniskaart-%28ex%29partnergeweld.pdf)and the[**Knowledge Base for Elder Abuse**](https://www.aanpak-ouderenmishandeling.nl/kennisbank)contain a lot of information that you can share with your colleagues.

**2. Make the topic personal**

Domestic violence is about people, it affects people. So, in working with people, you can have to deal with it. It is important to give the theme 'face' and to appeal to the feelings of your employees.

'Realize that you are your own compass. Training helps, but it mainly appeals to your head. And with that, you get away from your feelings. I advocate self-knowledge in every professional and the courage to listen to your heart because it's always right.'
Experience expert

In general, professionals who work with people have made a conscious choice to do so: they want to mean something to their clients. A doctor says about this:

'You didn't become a doctor for nothing, you started working with people, so you can also hold your employees accountable for that.'

To increase awareness, it helps to make more frequent use of the expertise of experts by experience, for example for information or training. Search your area for opportunities.

An example is the Municipality of Rotterdam. On the campaign website[**Hidden Suffering**](https://www.rotterdam.nl/verborgen-leed)**,** various stories of experience about elder abuse can be found. In addition, the municipality makes theatre production Au!derdom available to[**healthcare professionals**](https://www.rotterdam.nl/verborgen-leed-zorgprofessional), among other things.

**3. Create a program**

To get and keep violence against adults under the attention of employees, it can help to draw up a program that includes components that recur over time.

'People become blind to the subject, so you have to keep repeating.'
Home Care Attention Officer

You must use different forms for this.

'In addition to theory, attention must also be paid to case studies, for example in the form of videos. Then you also talk to the caregivers.'
Attention officer nursing home

It can also help to make elder abuse and partner violence concretely visible in the organization. For example, by hanging posters. Or by handing out an A4 to all employees that contain signals on one side and the step-by-step plan on the other

'As an employee, you have to be confronted with it daily and be addressed directly. Otherwise, it will sink in.'
Employee VVT

In the[**online conversation tool 'In conversation about reporting code dilemmas',**](https://www.augeo.nl/def/meldcode-gesprekshandreiking/)several issues are described specifically about elder abuse or partner violence. Schedule a team meeting to discuss the case with each other.

**4. Use ambassadors**

In addition to the domestic violence officer, there are often other officials in the organisation who can play an important role in identifying and discussing domestic violence at an earlier stage. In the case of elder abuse, these are, for example, dementia case managers, home counsellors from district care, a residential care coordinator or a family counsellor/supporter in the VVT.

'Family counsellors are colleagues who are called in when there is a hassle between clients and the family or between the organisation and the family. They are trained in mediation, conversation and identification. So that helps enormously.'
Employee VVT

For example, more colleagues can act as ambassadors for the reporting code and domestic violence. A focus officer from a hospital says that he has started a promotional campaign by having these colleagues talk about how important they think the theme is.

'This allows you to plant seeds with colleagues, in short contacts. In addition, you have to implement it in existing structures and in the induction programme.'

**5. Discuss after**

Evaluation is an important part of learning to work more effectively with the reporting code. Discuss case histories with the professionals involved, to learn from each other, reflecting with each other and being able to move forward individually.

'It is very instructive to evaluate a case properly and to talk to employees more often about their actions. How did everyone experience that? And then also pay attention to the undercurrent, what does it do to you, for example, if you have asked that difficult question? Then you can also take a good look together at what made it work.'
Attention Officer in Home Care

It is also important to share success stories with each other, to inspire each other and to show what has worked.

For more tips and practical examples from attention officers, see also theme 1 [**Knowledge about the reporting code**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/kennis-van-de-meldcode/)**.** The[**other themes**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/)also contain interesting information for keeping the theme of domestic violence against adults on the agenda.

How do you, as an organisation, contribute to identifying and tackling domestic violence against adults? View tips and practical examples here.

**3 tips for organisations in the event of violence against adults**

**1. Put the theme on the agenda**

Violence against adults does not yet seem to be on the agenda, especially in healthcare organizations. Employees feel insecure because it is hardly a topic of conversation.

'If there is already a gut feeling, you hope that a colleague will ask a question, then you dare to talk about it. If someone else puts it into words, others say: Oh, now I see it.'

Appointing a domestic violence focus officer is the first step to getting the topic on the agenda. Important conditions for this are that the attention officer is given sufficient time to perform his or her role properly, that several attention officers are appointed in a large organization and that all employees know who that attention officer is and what they can contact him or her for.

Making use of the expertise of experienced experts can also work well in putting the subject on the agenda. Read more about this in this article**'**[**Show professional courage and be present in the event of domestic violence**](https://www.movisie.nl/artikel/toon-professionele-moed-wees-present-huiselijk-geweld)**' (movisie.nl).**

You can read more tips for embedding attention to domestic violence under theme 1[**Knowledge of the reporting code**](https://www.augeo.nl/nl-nl/wijzer-met-de-meldcode/kennis-van-de-meldcode/organisatie/)**.**

**2. Facilitate learning about domestic violence**

'We have to learn to stand firm and dare to discuss concerns. With each other but also with clients.'

In order to better anchor the attention to domestic violence in the organization, according to the experts from the field, it is helpful if training on the domestic violence reporting code is mandatory for all employees. This only works if employees are allowed to follow the training during working hours.

'You have to put time into training. With us, only I, as an attention officer, get time for training and then I have to find time to train the rest of the employees. I think that's a bad thing.'
Domestic violence officer

A learning pot containing time for training for all employees can then be a solution.

**3. Include questions about how things are going and about the relationship in the working method**

To keep employees alert to the importance of questions about the client's relationship with the partner/informal caregiver, it helps to include questions about this in the normal procedure, for example during the intake.

'We ask about aggression, substance use, whether there are children, PTSD, but we don't ask about violence in the relationship. If someone doesn't say anything about it themselves, then I don't think to actively ask about partner violence myself. Introducing standards in the intake and in the structure of our organisation would help me enormously.'
Addiction care employee

In addition to lowering the threshold for your employees to talk about 'private matters', as an organization you send the message that it is a normal topic of conversation for you: 'Here you can talk about that. We do not judge any problems.'