



CREATEYOURFUTURE

**QUALITY SYSTEM
FOR CAREER
COUNSELLING
FOR CHILDHOOD
CANCER
SURVIVORS**





„This project (2014-1-BG01-KA204-001721) has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.“



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QUALITY SYSTEM FOR CAREER COUNSELLING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER SURVIVORS

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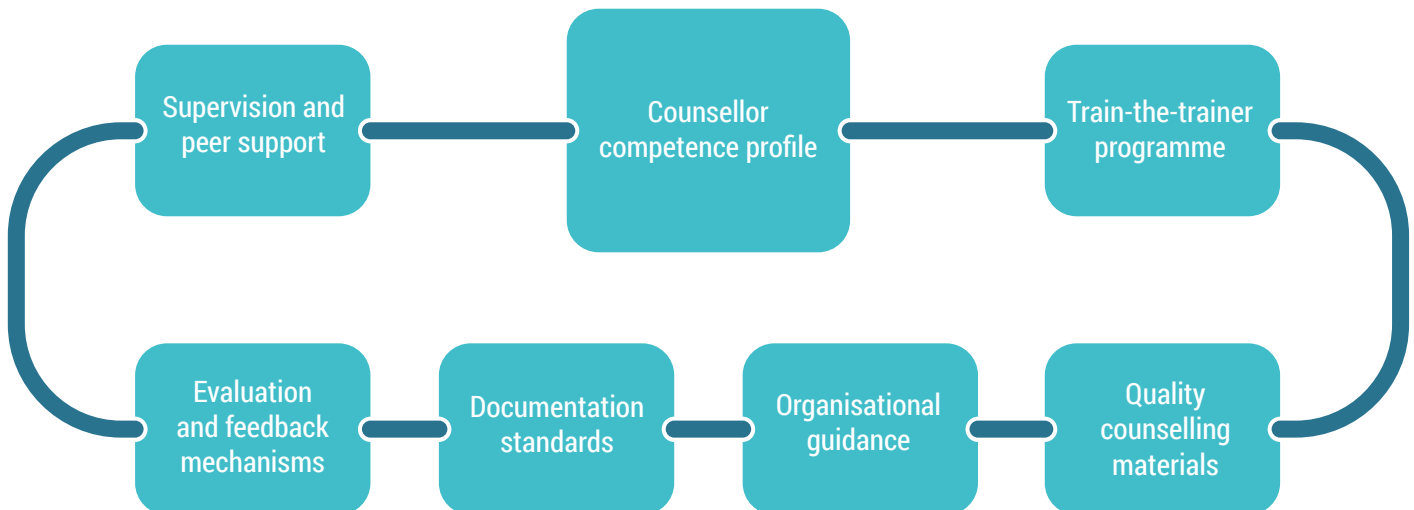
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Definition of quality in this specific counselling context

The 'Create your Future' Vocational Orientation Programme has been developed under the EU project of the same name within the Erasmus+ Programme.

'Create your Future' provides adolescents and young adults who are childhood cancer survivors long-term with individual support for professional reorientation, development of career prospects, application procedure information as well as counselling in relation to dealing with the disease in their work and in the job application process. 'Create your Future' goes beyond the pure vocational orientation - it takes into account psychosocial factors and addresses various disease-related needs and topics. A main issue in 'Create your Future' is the long-term individual support for cancer survivors; its focus is on the care and the possibility for developing individual but yet realistic prospects for professional development and growth.

Working with the vulnerable target group of Childhood Cancer Survivors indispensably requires that a set of standards are always respected. To this end, the project partnership of the 'Create your Future' project developed a quality system which was implemented in the project's pilot phase and which may serve future career counsellors working with the same target group as an important implementation tool. The quality system covers the following aspects:



Counsellor competence profile

Professionals who want to provide career counselling to young Childhood Cancer Survivors may come from different professional backgrounds: education, psychology, health care, counselling, or other. Potentially, they all bring valuable expertise to this specific counselling task. Apart from professional qualification sensitivity and dedication of the individual counsellor are key to success. It must, however, be stated that the vulnerable target group and the very specific life situation in which the counselling takes place does not create an ideal ground for job beginners. Organisers of the counselling process should therefore insist that their counsellors meet some minimum requirements.

The vocational orientation for children and adolescents requires competences and experience in the following areas:

- Pedagogy
- Counselling
- Psychology
- Social pedagogy
- Vocational orientation and labour market training

An inexperienced counsellor rarely incorporates all these competencies. However, it is mandatory for him or her to have at least a basic training in one of the fields listed above, and at least three to five years relevant professional experience; and also be experienced in labour market measures. Due to the complexity of the situation, working with the target group is not appropriate for people who are in the beginning of their professional development.

The counsellor profile in a nutshell:

1. Recognized pedagogic qualification (as teacher, trainer or counsellor) or

Psycho- social qualification:

- a. Degree in psychology
- b. „Life coach“
- c. Mental trainer (diploma)
- d. Coach
- e. Psychotherapist
- f. Etc.

2. 3- 5 years of professional experience
3. Practice in job orientation (training or career counselling)

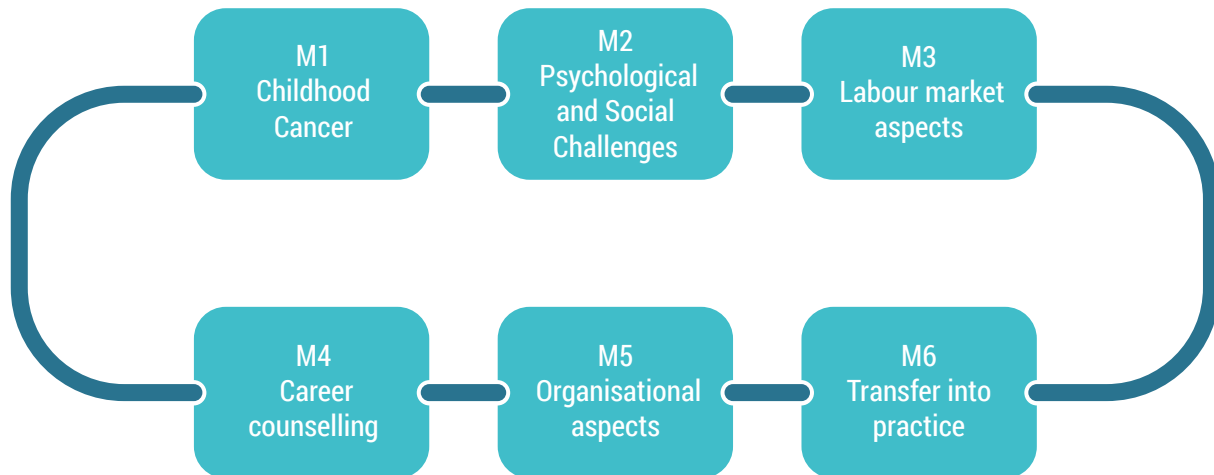
Higher education and vocational education and training programmes vary from country to country. It is therefore up to the respective organisers of the counselling to assess what kind of education programmes should be eligible for the general requirements mentioned above.

Train-the-trainer programme

Providing career counselling to survivors of childhood cancer requires specific preparation on top of the above-mentioned qualification profile. The Create your Future project developed a specific train-the-trainer programme which prepares participants for career counselling of Childhood Cancer Survivors. The programme objectives are:

- To prepare counsellors of existing types of childhood cancer and the different long term effects of childhood cancer and its treatment in order to achieve common and feasible goals for the integration of Childhood Cancer Survivors in the working and / or educational environment.
- To prepare counsellors with career development knowledge and skills to help Childhood Cancer Survivors make informed career decisions and engage in educational planning that maximizes their potential.
- To prepare counsellors who demonstrate an understanding and application of established and emerging counselling theories through effective use of individual techniques for working with Childhood Cancer Survivors.
- To prepare counsellors to work collaboratively with hospital staff (especially psychologists and social workers), families, school staff and pupils and employers and co-workers to achieve common goals for the integration of Childhood Cancer Survivors in the working and / or educational environment.
- To prepare counsellors to encourage existing skills, strengths and the autonomy of the participants.
- To prepare counsellors to make appropriate referrals to meet students' diverse social, emotional, academic, and career needs.
- To prepare counsellors with knowledge and skills to integrate different educational and working opportunities in relation to the different academic, career, and personal/social student competencies.

It consists of six modules:



The train-the-trainer programme is very flexible: it can be implemented as a face-to-face seminar, as an e-learning programme or in blended learning mode, as a combination of the two. Its modular character allows to tailor the training to the individual expertise and experience of the new counsellor, i.e. only those modules which cover competence gaps need to be trained.

The training curriculum and materials can be accessed in the section Resources on the Project website. Create your Future partner institutions can be contacted for providing training if wished for:

<https://createyourfuture-eu.org/about-us/>.

Quality counselling materials

The web platform <http://createyourfuture-eu.org> provides to the 'Create your Future' counsellor a range of materials on the following topics:

- Cancer and its effects
- Labour market and further training
- Vocational orientation and job application

The materials are by no means exhaustive. They only serve as a source of information for the 'Create your Future' counsellors. The materials are tailored to needs of childhood cancer Survivors and have been successfully applied in practice. It is strongly recommended to use personal, verified materials, and active exchange of tools between counsellors.

Organisational guidance

To ensure a constant quality level the organisation of the counselling process must be carefully planned and documented. To this end, the 'Create your Future' Manual was developed . The document :

- Describes important project-related working procedures
- Includes crucial forms and templates
- Provides guidance for new counsellors
- Enables standardized performance of the 'Create your Future' project, and
- Makes a contribution to the quality management

The 'Create your Future' Manual can be accessed in the section Resources on the Project website. Moreover, the 'Create your Future' partner institutions may be contacted for consultancy on the organisation of the counselling process.

Documentation standards

An important obligation of each counsellor is to document their work with the clients. In the interests of trackability, quality assurance and financial reporting, mostly the type, content results and duration of contacts are systematically recorded. It is recommended to create an appropriate database. Furthermore, it is each counsellor's responsibility to keep records, which do not replace database records.

A possible structure of documents is shown in the 'Create your Future' Manual for Counsellors , which can be accessed in the section Resources on the Project website.

<https://createyourfuture-eu.org/free-resources/>

Evaluation and feedback

For impact measurement and accountability reasons an evaluation and feedback procedure needs to be in place. Organisers of the career counselling need to know if their programme has the desired effects. The type, frequency and intensity of evaluation may vary from institution to institution, but should in any case be continuous and recurrent.

Main target groups of the evaluation and feedback are:

- The clients themselves
- Their families
- Other professionals involved

Guidance on evaluation and suggestions for evaluation forms can be found in the 'Create your Future' Manual for Counsellors in the section Resources on the Project website:

<https://createyourfuture-eu.org/free-resources/>

Supervision and peer support

On the basis of the experience gained with counselling of Childhood Cancer Survivors we emphasize that this work can be extremely demanding and challenging for the counsellor involved. The counsellor's mental well-being can be at stake, also having consequences on the quality of support for the client. Dealing with cancer and its potential consequences poses a big mental challenge, and measures need to be set in place to strengthen and invigorate the counsellor. To this end we strongly recommend the following:

- Frequent meetings for sharing and exchanging experiences with colleagues and supervisors.
- Regular team and / or individual supervision for Career Counsellors by a qualified psychologist or clinical supervisor. The supervision may be focused on specific cases (case-based) or on the team development and the professionalization of the support.
- Another useful practice which was adopted in some of the counselling teams is the buddy system for mutual support and exchange of ideas how to deal with more complex and challenging cases.



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