

REFLECT FOR EFFECT

THIS PROJECT EXPLORES THE REQUIREMENTS OF A SIMPLE, VISUAL, USER-CENTERED DIGITAL TOOL FOR ON-THE-SPOT REFLECTION FOR PROFESSIONALS, SPECIFICALLY FOR THE REDUCTION OF SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIOR AND THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN IN CARE.



Lectoraat Jeugdzorg (Child & Youth Social Care Research Group) investigates the design and delivery of services for children and their families. The group provides practical knowledge, tools, and instruments to improve youth care services.



Qpido provides training on sexual abuse, sexting & grooming and human trafficking for youths, parents and workers in youth care, youth protection, youth psychiatry, youth probation and foster care. Qpido is part of **Level**, an Amsterdam-based youth care organization and provides parenting support, specialist youth care and complex psychiatric care to children, youths, and families.



Communication and Multimedia Design (CMD) is a design bachelor program focused on interactive digital products and services. Students strengthen and expand their learning via real-world project work.

Design a simple, user-centered digital reflection tool to improve the quality of child and youth social care

THE PROJECT

The context. Every child needs a safe and caring environment. In some cases, children and their families need help to achieve this. The research group **Child & Youth Social Care** provides practical knowledge, tools and instruments to improve youth care services for organizations like **Level**. One of these instruments is **effective reflection** for youth care workers.

Recent research by CMD students and a group of child protection professionals shows the need for a digital tool for on-the-spot reflection. Professionals would like to reflect just before or right after a meeting or session with children, young people or parents. This helps to stick to the essential and working elements. They prefer a short, personalized checklist that can be used on a mobile phone. Direct visual feedback on performance and process, and the possibility to share personal progress with peers and supervisors supports the development of effective child and youth social care.

The problem. Professionals in child and youth social care usually apply many different methods and techniques in their work with children, young people and their parents. It takes a lot of practice and experience to deliver these with good quality and it requires support to be able to continue to deliver quality. Reflection and feedback are essential in this process.

At present, there are no well-designed tools to support effective on-the-spot reflection during training or the day-to-day work with children, young people and their parents. The existing instruments on paper are helpful, but are labor-intensive and lack direct feedback and personalization. See [this example](#) of a reflection instrument on the topic of relationship and sexuality education for children and young people in care.



METHODS

Research through Design (RtD) is an approach to conducting scholarly research that employs the methods, practices, and processes of design practice with the main intention of generating new knowledge. RtD often uses design artefacts that look and feel like finished products. These artefacts are used to test a hypothesis and/or incite or provoke discussion. Carefully scripted tests, observations and critique from end users are used to gather insights and data into the problem the artefact will solve.

User Centered Design (UCD) is an iterative design process in which designers focus on the users and their needs in each phase of the design process. In UCD, designers involve users throughout the design process via a variety of research and design techniques, to create highly usable and accessible products for them. In user-centered design, designers use a mixture of investigative and generative methods and tools to develop an understanding of user needs.

ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

The project goal is a specification for a digital application that supports the continuous reflection process based on needs and wants of professionals in child and youth social care..

The design deliverable is a functioning (web)app that can be re-used as a framework for the final product.

The budget required is €10.000 for software development, facilitation and supervision of the co-creation process, user testing and processing the results into design deliverables.

Co-Creation Designers, trainers, researchers, developers, and professionals working at Level will design a check-and-reflect tool in a series of design iterations. The participants jointly build and test a working digital tool. In a structured design research process all stakeholders explore how the tool improves knowledge and awareness on sexual risk behavior and the prevention of sexual abuse, and subsequently improve the lives of children and young people in care. In one iteration, a small group of Level-professionals will use the tool in their practice to reflect on interventions.



DESIGN CHALLENGES

How do I personalize a checklist?

Earlier research by CMD students shows that child protection professionals say they will reflect more effectively by using a short, configurable checklist that can be used on a mobile phone.

Can I be persuaded by a data visualization?

An interactive visual gives direct visual feedback on the checklist, shows performance and progress towards personal goals, stimulates reflection.

How do I integrate with the organizational process?

An easy way to share personal progress with peers and seniors, embedding the result in the organizations' process of reflection

COECI THEMES

To strengthen the creative ecosystem of the sector Research through Design is a useful and fun approach for field research and data gathering. Doing it right requires design knowledge and skills. To understand and use design methods and artefacts, scientists and researchers must create working relationships with designers.

One of the expected takeaways of this project is a working example of the way designers and researchers can work together.

To create a healthy human condition

It is important for anyone whose work involves young people to be able to contribute to the reduction of sexual risk behavior and the prevention of sexual abuse. This project explores how a simple, visual, user-centered digital tool can improve the quality of child and youth social care on this specific subject, and subsequently the lives of hundreds of children. The project outcomes add to professional practice and social work education and help to build effective services for children and their families in the urban area of Amsterdam.



LONG-TERM PROSPECTS

Reflection is key in the implementation of interventions, methods and techniques in organizations for child and youth social care. There are no well-designed digital tools to support this. The project is a first step towards a user-friendly reflection tool for **all child and youth social care professionals** in the application of the different core methods and techniques they use to reach better outcomes for children and young people in care.