# Chat and e-mail in social work strength and vulnerability





# The content of this workshop

- An overview of different ict-applications and tools
- Implementation of online help
- Characteristics of chat
  - Partners / actors in chat
  - Chat as a process
  - Chat skills
- Characteristics of e-mail
  - Actors in an e-mail
  - E-mail as a process

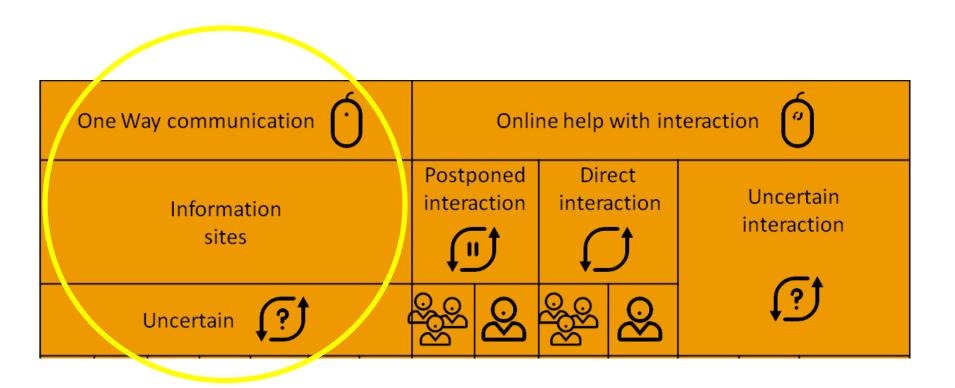


# Online help



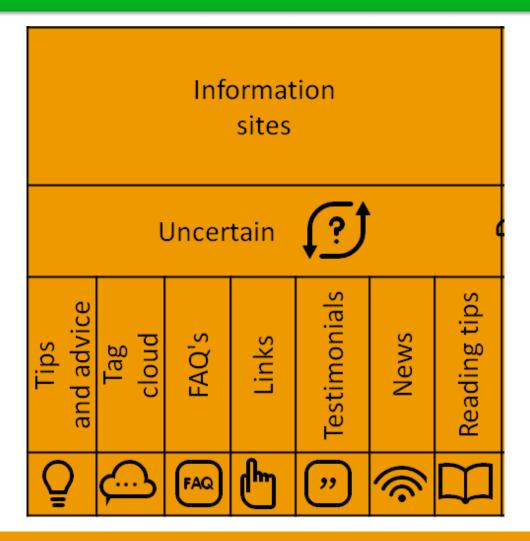


# ICT applications and tools



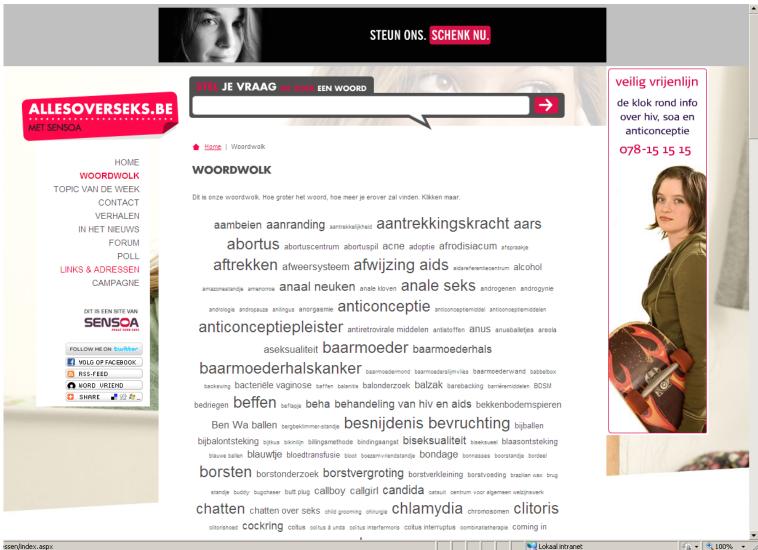


# ICT applications and tools





# Example 1: tag cloud



# Example 2: frequent asked questions

Bezpłatny telefon zaufania  ila az eci i młodzieży  często  zadewane pymus  pymus  pomocy  pomocy  pymus  pymus  pomocy  pymus  pymus	
Powrót reduentiv asked questions	
Wyszukiwarka:  Wybierz kategorię:  Tutaj możesz zobaczyć najczęściej zadawane pytania.  Please use the search angine to look for interesting You information.  If you do not znajdziejsz answer one burning question You- write to us or call. We Are Waiting.  Zadaj pytanie  Pytanie  Inead helo-what should I do?  If you need someone to talk to, call us at the number 116 111. You can talk with us in hours: 12.00-20.00 7 days a vieek.  Pytanie  Pytanie  Is till call number 116 111, or do I pay for this call?  Pytanie  Is this phone is for me?  Pytanie  Who will I speak at this number?	

Polish CHL <a href="http://www.116111.pi/czesto">http://www.116111.pi/czesto</a> zadawane pytania via google translator - 3.2.2012

# Example 3: testimonials



Greek CHL http://www.tilefonikigrammi.gr/eipangiaemas.asp

# Example 4: news



Malta CHL <a href="http://www.kellimni.com/#">http://www.kellimni.com/#</a>

	Strength - advantage	Vulnerability – disadvantage
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From the perspective of the client		
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	Strength - advantage	Vulnerability – disadvantage
From the perspective of the client	<ul> <li>Finding words and language for a vague feeling</li> <li>Finding structure</li> <li>Finding concrete info</li> <li>Well organised</li> <li>You can search info yourself</li> <li>Low threshold</li> <li>Easy to use</li> <li>Available 24/24 hrs and 7/7 days</li> <li>Safe - anonymous</li> <li>Easy to download</li> <li>Being able to read info</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>It is not your own story</li> <li>But what do I do next?</li> <li>Info alone is often too limited</li> <li>Voyeurism/"accident tourism" in testimonials</li> <li>Often lack of stimulus to do anything further</li> <li>Chance of misinterpretation</li> <li>Source? How reliable is the info?</li> <li>Losing your way in the mass of info (film, tips,)</li> <li>Shop behaviour</li> </ul>



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From the perspective of the organisation/social worker		
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<u>_</u>	Strength - advantage	Vulnerability - disadvantage
From the perspective of the organisation/social worker	Selection of info is already a substantial service Info = complete Saving time Combination of tools and interaction Larger outreach	<ul> <li>Tailored = much work</li> <li>Updating requires sustained effort</li> <li>Importance of profiling</li> <li>Matching language and style to different target groups is not easy</li> <li>Accessibility on website =?</li> <li>Digital gap!!</li> <li>Chance of misinterpretation</li> <li>Difficult to decide which info to give/not to give</li> <li>Danger of 'self diagnosis'</li> </ul>

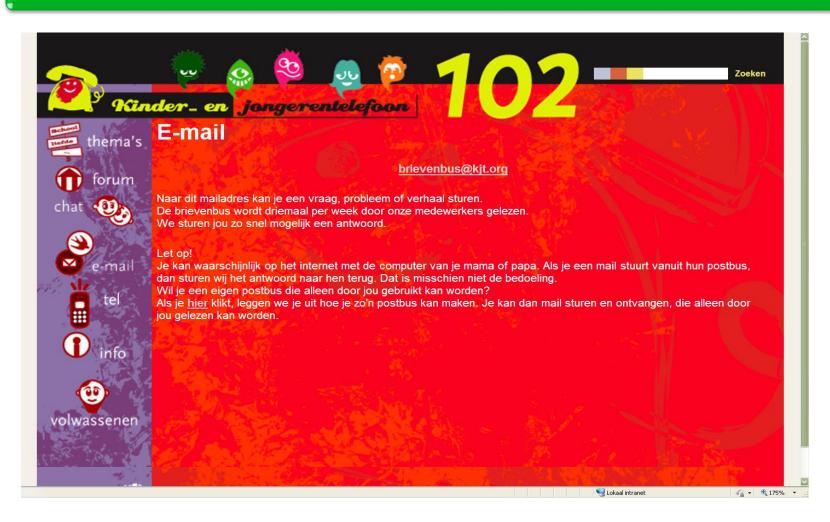


# **ICT** applications

Online help with interaction											
Postp intera	oned action	Dir intera	Uncertain								
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) (Sec.)	8	999 999	80		<b>€</b>	<i>f</i>					
Forum	E-mail	Chatroom	One-to-one chat	Social network	Self test and Self Help intruments						



# Example 5: e-mail help



CHL Flanders http://www.kjt.org/email

# Example 6: one-to-one chat



United Kingdom CHL http://www.childline.org.uk/talk/Pages/Talk.aspx

# Example 8: social networksites



Romanian CHL <a href="http://ro-ro.facebook.com/asociatiatelefonulcopilului">http://ro-ro.facebook.com/asociatiatelefonulcopilului</a>

# Example 9: serious games



## **POVERTY IS NOT A GAME**

Home Play the game For teachers FAQ Press Downloads Contact

### Play the game online

If you've never played PING before, you need to install the unity plugin for your browser, otherwise you cannot play the game. If you have any problems, take a look at our frequently asked questions (FAQ) for advice!

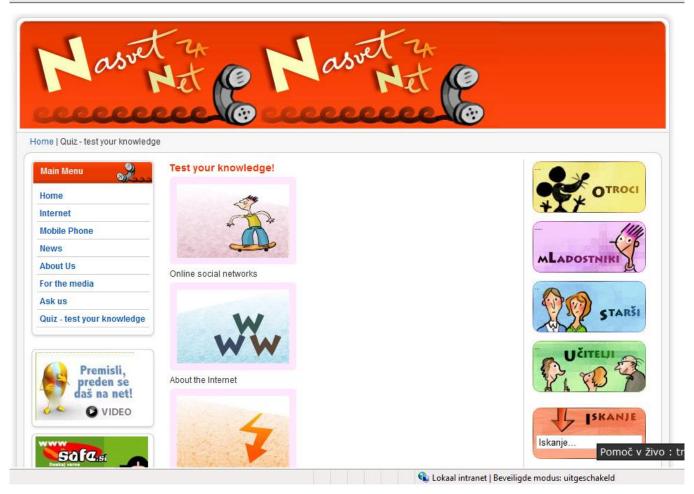
Tip: Once playing, you can go to fullscreen mode by clicking the cog at the top left of the screen.

Tip: When the game is too slow, you can, once you are playing, click the cog at the top left of the screen and reduce the graphical quality.





# Example 10: self test



Test your knowledge on the Slovenian site <a href="http://www.nasvetzanet.si/">http://www.nasvetzanet.si/</a>

# **ICT** applications

One Way communication (								Onli	ne help	with in	teracti	on (	9		
	Information sites							Postponed interaction		Direct interaction		Uncertain interaction			
	l	Jncer	tain	(?)	,	(	<u> </u>	8	999 999	8	<b>₹</b>				
Tips and advice	Tag cloud	FAQ's	Links	Testimonials	News	Reading tips	Forum	E-mail	Chatroom	One-to-one chat	Social network	Serious games	Self test and	Self Help	intruments
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**Vulnerability - disadvantage Strength - advantage** From the perspective of the client



t	Strength - advantage	Vulnerability - disadvantage
From the perspective of the client	<ul> <li>Rereading info</li> <li>Writing = therapeutic</li> <li>Taboos more readily open to discussion</li> <li>Anonymity</li> <li>Often available 24/24 + 7/7</li> <li>Low-threshold/(more) anonymous</li> <li>Avoids travel time</li> <li>Active help as and when</li> <li>From familiar surroundings</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Illusion of instant cure</li> <li>'Non-committal commitment'</li> <li>Channel reduction</li> <li>Chance of misinterpretation</li> <li>Mail = slow</li> <li>Technical failures</li> <li>Digital footprint</li> </ul>



**Strength - advantage Vulnerability - disadvantage** 



(1) ·	Strength - advantage	Vulnerability - disadvantage
From the perspective of the organisation/social worker	<ul> <li>Giving the client 'language'</li> <li>More complete info</li> <li>Faster work alliance</li> <li>Stimulating tools</li> <li>Regaining lost target group</li> <li>Outreach to new target groups</li> <li>Wider accessibility/availability</li> <li>Possibility of work from home (?)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Ethical uncertainties</li> <li>Over- and under-disclosure</li> <li>Doubt regarding authenticity</li> <li>Chance of misinterpretation</li> <li>Filling in missing info</li> <li>Development/delivery costs time and money</li> <li>Doubt after loss of contact</li> <li>Limited 'google-ability'</li> </ul>



# Implementation of online help





# When your organization goes online the position of your organization is changing

# Online help =

- New collegues and concurrents
- Focus changes: from region to country
- Contact possibilities all over the world
- Contact with your clients is (sometimes)
  - Faceless
  - Placeless
  - 24/24 and 7/7



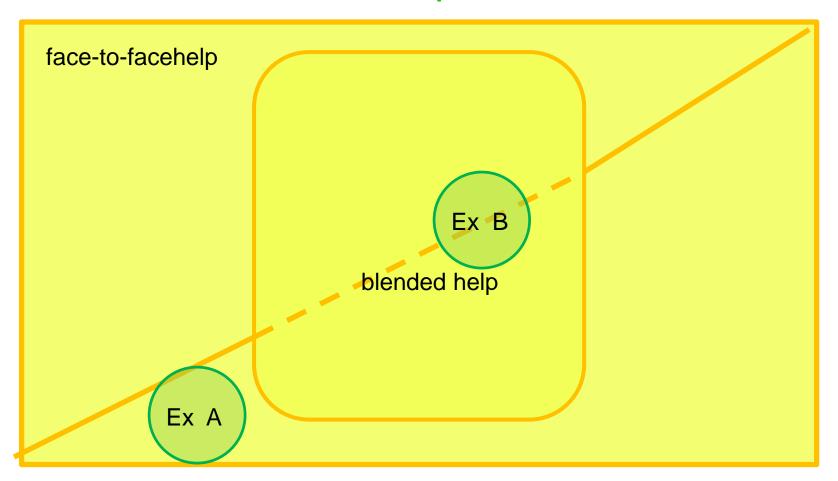
# Position of online help IN your organization

Are your ict-applications ...

- o complementary with other care modalities?
- substituting traditional care modalities?
- a part of blended help?



# Position of online help



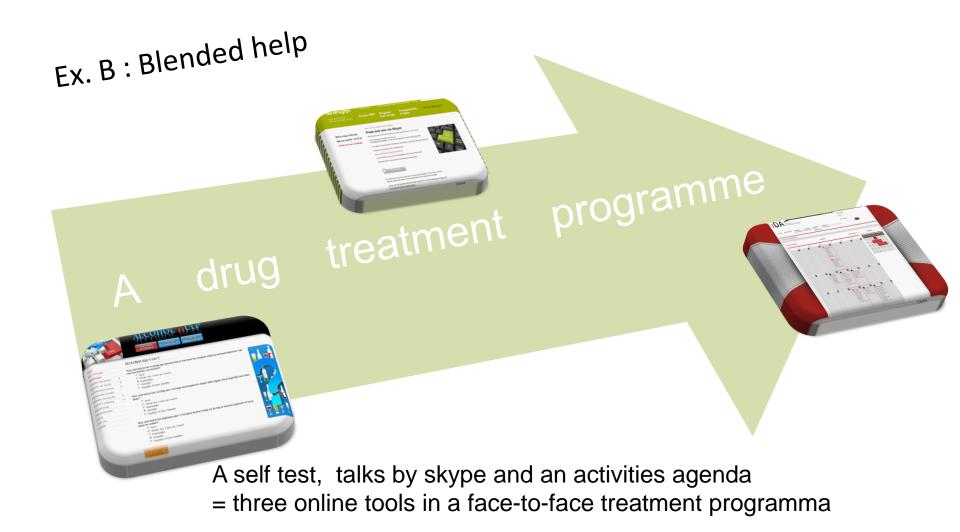
online help



next to phonehelp, forum or e-mail Ex A: Chat as an equal alternative









# Mixing different help modalities and ICT applications

		online												
	letter	phone	face-to- face	Ш	(F	•	<b>S</b>			FAQ		,,	(fr	(P)
Tele-Onthaal														
JAC's														
Zelfmoordlijn														
Holebifoon														
Slachtofferchat														
Kinderrechtswinkel														
KJT														
Teleblok														
druglijn														
Alcoholhulp														
Boysproject														



# Position of online help IN your organization

Which ICT-applications do you offer to which target groups?





http://www.hrabritelefon.hr/hr/home



# About chathelp

Chat-partners / chat-actors **Chat-process** Chat-skills





# **Imagine**

- You are a social helper ...
- Looking at your computer screen ...
- Not knowing who is going to be online ...
- Somebody enters the chat room ...
- An adult ... a child ... a boy ... a girl ???
- Faceless
- Voiceless ...

Just seeing signs and symbols on the screen!



# Daily practice: chathelp

- organisation: hello and welcome
- Mary: difficult to start. Been waiting one hour to talk to somebody, glad it's 7 pm
- organisation: just tell what you have in mind
- Mary: feel frightened
- Mary: afraid for calls coming in, afraid that they'll knock again on the frontdoor
- Mary: : I just don't know what to do. I feel like hurting myself = going to the railway.
- Organisation: ......



### **Answering Mary**

- Step 1: Screen reading
  - What exactly do you see on the screen?
  - What do you think? What do you feel?
  - What is invisible? Unknown?
- Step 2: Screen writing
  - Write a reaction to Mary



### Daily practice: chathelp

- organisation: hello and welcome
- Mary difficult to start. Been waiting one hour to talk to somebody, glad it's 7 pm
- organisation: just tell what you have in mind
- Mary: feet frightened
- Mary afraid for calls coming in afraid that they'll knock again on the frontdoor
- Mary: : I just don't know what to do I feel like hurting myself = going to the railway.
- Organisation: ......

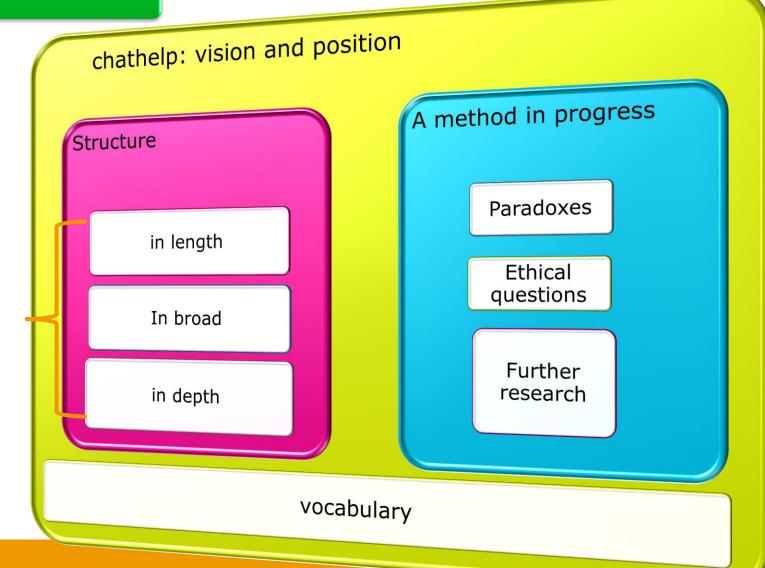


### Characteristics of the chat medium

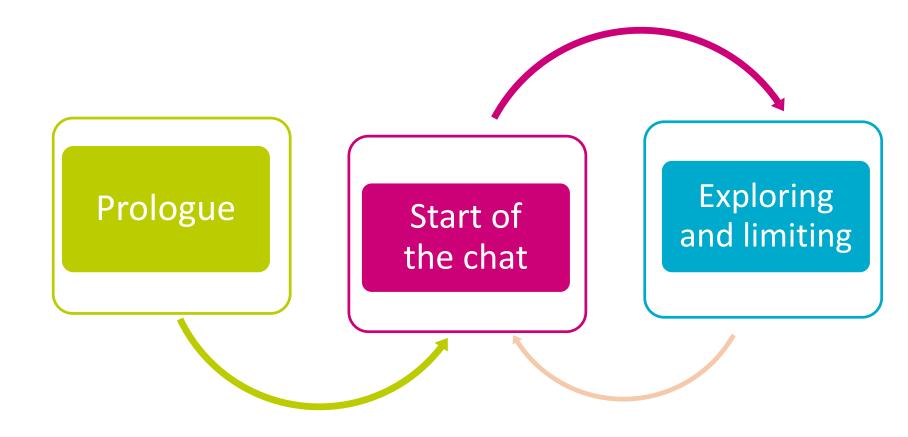
- Channel reduction:
  - The listener's <u>eye</u> (instead of the listener's <u>ear</u>)
- Direct one-to-one-communication
  - Time to answer is short
- Disinhibition: intimate outpourings in a very short time
- Communicating in silence: no need to formulate, to express, "they can't hear me crying"
- The therapeutic effect of screenwriting
- The phenomenon of 'multitasking', influencing the tempo



### Ch@tlas



# Ch@tlas ... structure in length several steps in a chat conversation





## **Prologue**

- The phase between the log-in and the start of the chat
- Essential: the website has ...
  - necessary information on chat conditions and rules (anonymity)
  - to reduce the threshold
  - to explain clearly the way to go from the login to the start of the chat



### The start of the chat

- Chat start =
  - introduction, welcome, making acquaintance
  - an open and invited question
  - the first description of the problem, question or need
- Recommendations:
  - the chat counsellor initiates
  - offers a warm welcome
  - immediately makes use of the nickname of the client
  - recognizes the first description of the problem

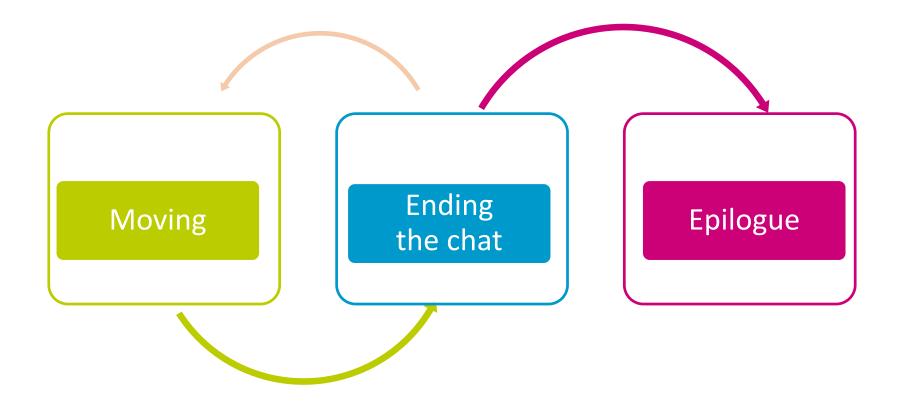


## **Exploring and limiting**

- The need of the client has to be explored and limited
- Recommendations:
  - give the client the opportunity to focus
  - check again and again if the problem or question has been correctly understood
  - refrain and control the inclination to offer immediate solutions
  - ask helping questions in case of underdisclosure and temporise in case of overdisclosure



# Ch@tlas ... structure in length several steps in a chat conversation





## Moving

- No solution, no profound change
  - Only a slight modification in the visible signs, symbols and tempo
- Possible methods to achieve 'movement'
  - Give personalised information
  - Give support, develop a chat alliance
  - Introduce another perspective on the problem
  - Refer to other (online) services



## **Ending chat**

- Announcement of the ending of the chat
  - by the client
  - by the counsellor
- Recommendations:
  - be aware of circular reasoning
  - offer the opportunity for reflection and feedback
  - check if the chat brought 'rest' or 'enlightenment'
  - tell the client that he can finish the chat



## **Epilogue**

- Epilogue =
  - A phase in which the client as well as the counsellor are given the opportunity to evaluate and register impressions, insights and signals, in order to optimize the chatservice
- Recommendations:
  - Create a dropbox for the client
  - Stimulate the clinet to send reflections by email
  - Ask questions to evaluate the ending chat
  - Write a reflection report for (peer) supervision



# ch@tlas... structure in broad the actors in a chat

- The nickname
- Under- or overdisclosure
- The context



- Nickname and chatalliance
- 'I' or 'we' or 'the team'



The chat client

### The chat client

- The nickname
  - Mary
  - An emoticon
  - A problematic term: e.g. 'depressed'
  - An initial
- Information about the age
- Information on gender
- Information of the context



### Who are the chat clients?

#### Research results (416 clients)

- 80% women
- 43% already knew the website + 27% 'via Google' + 18% via other channels such as school
- 9/10 used internet daily
- 45% got an immediate account online,
- 38% reported the chat room was occupied
  - 9%: mentioned a technical default
- 13%: was not alone during the chat



### The chat counsellor

- A nickname
- The real first name
- The name of the organisation
- Information about the expertise
- Information about the age
- Information about gender



## Chat counsellors report ...

At first I sometimes panicked. I am much quieter now and the conversations are totally different now.

"Your senses focus online... I try not to imagine a face. My work as a volunteer on the phone, helps me to realise that there is a human being on the other side of the line."

"Chat is totally different. I have difficulties with the lack of nonverbal communication online."

"Online is special because you have to write and to formulate something. The other one must do this as well. That is fascinating. It is important that you don't keep yourself too much at a distance."



# ch@tlas... structure in depth using chat skills

#### Screenreading

- What do you see? Words, signs and symbols
- What do you assume?
- What is invisible?

#### Screenwriting

- How do you write?
- Which signs or symbols do you use?
- How to emphasize ?
- How to express ?

## Conversational skills

- Active listening: 'mmm'
- Questioning
- Summarising
- Helping to structure ...



## Screenreading and screenwriting

- Language
- Text
- Tempo
- Signs



## language

#### **Characteristics**

- Chat callers and chat repliers use a different language / grammar
- The grammar is influenced by the dynamics and the tempo of chat conversations (aim: to gain time)

#### Recommendations

- Don't copy the callers grammar: use an informal spoken language in a 'written' form
- Tempo is crucial no need to correct all writing faults
- Use marks or smileys to add extra meaning to messages
- Pay attention to sudden changes in the text Is the caller angry, upset, sad or desperate?



#### text

#### Characteristics

- What is said/written, stays on the screen
- Mixed messages
   Sometimes a message comes in while you're typing ...
   ... storylines get mixed

#### Recommendations

- Help to structure
- Mixed messages

Ask for clarification if something is not clear.



### tempo

#### Recommendations

- Type fast
- Use abbreviations ( idd / indeed, OMG / Oh my God)
- Use short sentences
- Use lassos (type 'enter') to split long messages
- Don't correct all spelling mistakes. Use \* if necessary
- Send a question mark (?) in case it takes too long before you receive an answer
- Use sounds ( hmm, aah, ok) and smileys to express emotions
- Don't lose time writing harmonious phrases



#### Non verbal communication

- Marie: ... then she told me to go away
- Marie: then SHE told me to go away
- Marie: then she told 'me' to go away !?
- Marie: then she told me to ... 'go away'
- Marie: then ... she told me to go away :(
- Marie: THEN SHE TOLD ME TO GO AWAY !!!



## signs

- Emotic@ns
- CAPITALS, nooooooooo "", !!!
- Abbreviations
- Sounds 'hmm', 'waw'
- ??? en \*
- Empty messages, pregnant pauses ...

#### Ch@tlas

- description
- function and effects
- tips
- 4 steps to handle signs
- FAQ's about handling signs

#### Recommendations

- Read the messages carefully
- •Can you discover what's between the lines?
- Ask for clarification if necessary
- •Vary in the way you express, use words, smiley's, signs.



## About e-mail help





# E-mail ... structure in length 7 topics for qualitative e-mail help

- An e-mail adress or a web form ?
- Autoreply or not ?
- Dispatching an e-mail question ?
- The response deadline ?
- Obligatory information or not ?
- How to refer ?
- Attachments ... When en what ?



# E-mail ... structure in length several steps in handling an e-mail

Prologue

An Answer

Epilogue



## **Prologue**

- To read and analyse the e-mail question
  - Who is the e-mail client ?
  - What kind of question ?
  - What is the core question ?
  - Which information you have (not)?
  - Legal and ethical challenges ?
- Research
  - Do you need specific information to answer ?
  - Do you need advice of an expert or a colleague ?



## Formulating an answer

- Greeting and introduction
- (re-)formulate the (core) question
- Strenghten and recognize the client
- Answer the question
- Finish the e-mail
- Sign

Before sending the answer ... Is someone available to reread or review the answer ?



## E-mail ... structure in broad

#### the actors in an e-mail conversation



- Nickname or identity
- (Over-) disclosure
- The context



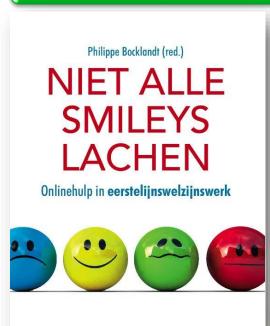
- Nickname or identity
- Using 'l' or 'we' in the answer

The chat counsellor



The chat

### More information or questions ...



acco



E-mail: philippe.bocklandt@arteveldehs.be

... and thank you