



***PORTAVITA***

***International Conference on Social Housing***

***Valerie Boogaard***





*Our mission:*

***HVO-Querido supports people in regaining and maintaining control over their lives after a period of severe disruption. We offer shelter, support, and daytime activities.***

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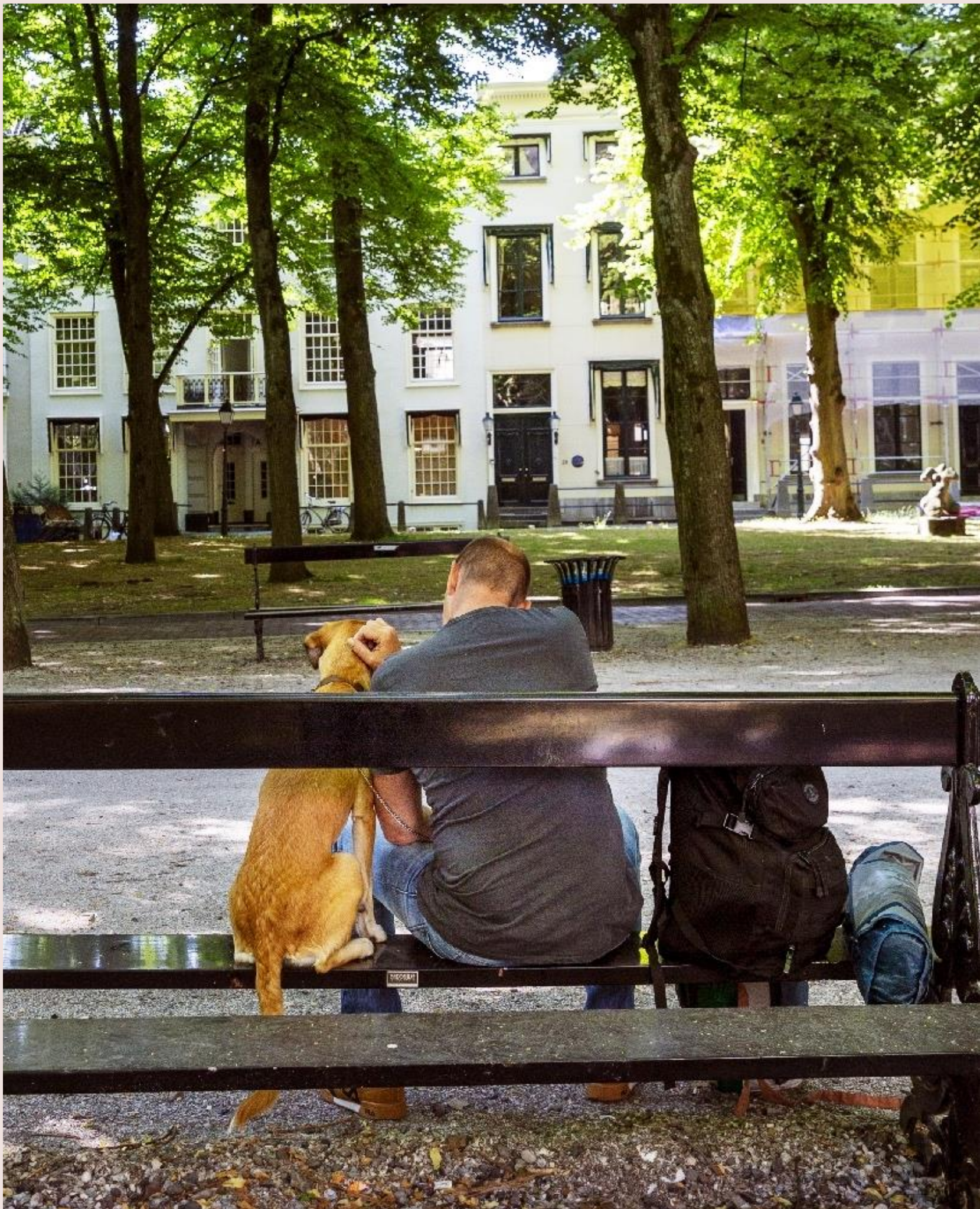


# ***HVO-Querido***

- ✓ Amsterdam focused NGO since 1904
- ✓ Over 75 different locations
- ✓ More than 6000 service users
- ✓ Around 1700 employees







# ***What HVO-Querido does***

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Supports people in vulnerable situations  
(e.g. homelessness, mental health issues, addiction)

Assists sex workers, victims of human trafficking,  
and undocumented individuals

Offers:

- Shelter and residential care
- Personal support
- Recovery groups and training
- Daytime activities and social participation

Strength-based, personal approach focused on inclusion

Outreaching work philosophy is based on Housing First.

Contributes to a safe, livable, and inclusive society

Works together with courage and equality



# ***Our services include***

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- Shelter / Supported housing for (young) adults
- Emergency shelter
- Housing and support for families
- Community living
- Forensic care
- Daytime activities
- Support for sex workers
- Center against Human Trafficking
- Housing and support for Wlz clients
- Shelter for refugees & undocumented people





# ***Amsterdam numbers 2023***

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- 17.000 homeless in Amsterdam (5700 visible)
  - 31.000 homeless in The Netherlands
  - 14 active organisations in the city, HVO is the biggest.
  - The municipality has a budget of around 200 million for the vulnerable groups in Amsterdam.
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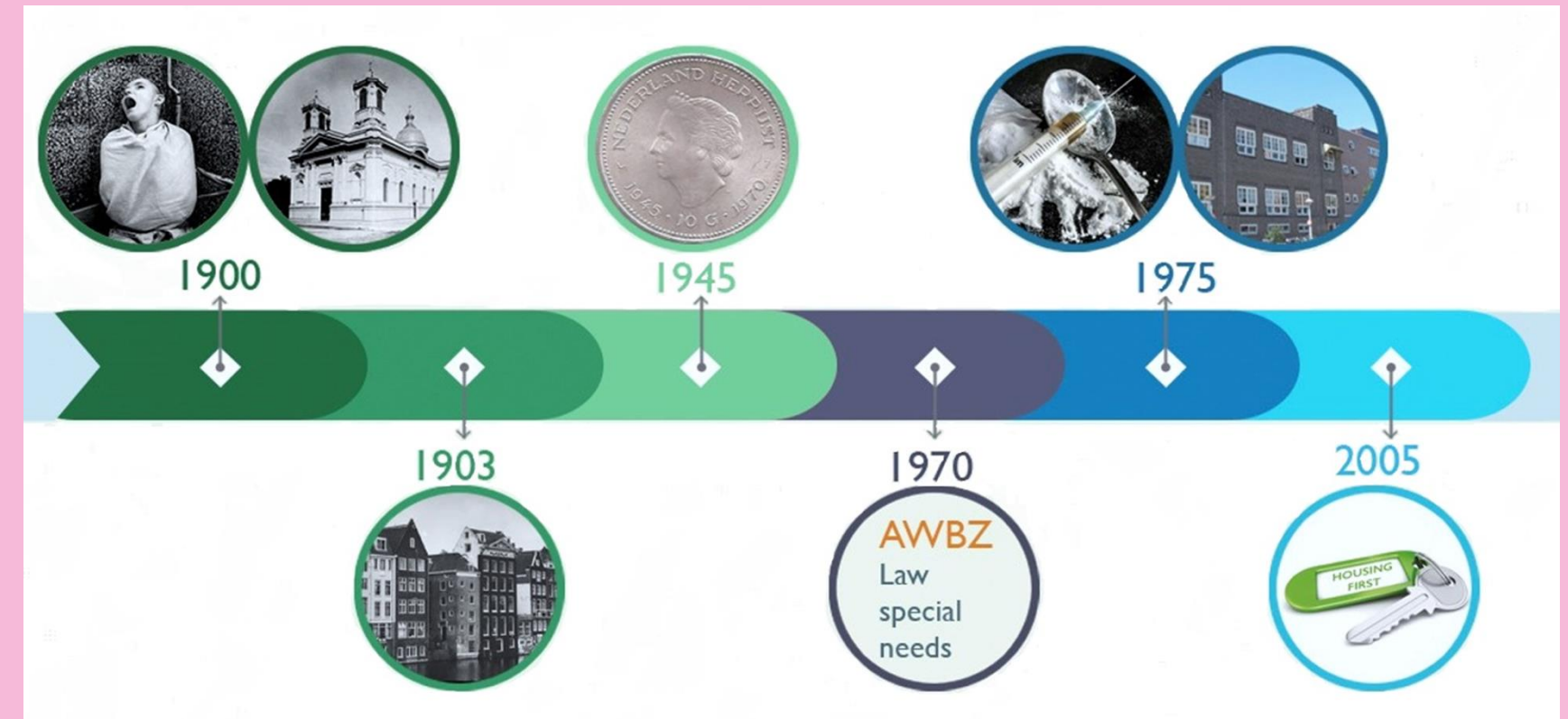
## ***Refugee numbers:***

- 2800 Ukraine municipality shelter, 2600 in private care
- 3242 places for other refugees.
- Shelter capacity for 500 undocumented people





# Pathway from Homelessness to Housing First in Amsterdam



## 2005 Housing First

Housing First started as a pilot program with 25 homes, in collaboration with a housing corporation, for individuals with the most complex needs, including those with a dual diagnosis (mental health and substance abuse issues). These individuals had tried numerous other solutions in Amsterdam, but nothing had worked for them. Then, Housing First came into their path.

## 2010-Reserach

In 2010, research showed that after one year, 93% of clients who participated in the Housing First program remained in their homes, demonstrating a high housing retention rate. This success led to an increase in the popularity of the program.

## 2016 Local policy Amsterdam

In 2016, with the introduction of a new law, Housing First became official local policy in Amsterdam, meaning that all organizations were required to provide Housing First support. As a result, 1,000 homes were made available in the city, and a center of expertise was established to train all relevant parties in the Housing First model.

## 2021 Action plan to tackle homelessness

In 2021, the National Action Plan in the Netherlands was presented, outlining the government's intention to prioritize housing and adopt the principles of Housing First as a central part of the plan. The action plan states that by 2030, the Netherlands aims to be homelessness-free.

# The 10 Working Agreements

*A shared framework for better care, housing, and collaboration in Amsterdam*

The 10 Working Agreements are a set of practical principles jointly developed by the Municipality of Amsterdam, care providers, and housing organizations.

They aim to improve the continuity, quality, and effectiveness of services for people in vulnerable situations—especially those moving from homelessness or protected housing toward more independent living. These agreements focus on:

- **Client-centered care** – tailored support that adapts to individual needs
- **Better coordination** – across services, housing, and social networks
- **Smooth transitions** – from shelter to supported or independent housing
- **Shared accountability** – between all parties involved
- **Data-informed action** – tracking results and learning from practice

By using these agreements, Amsterdam creates a more cohesive, responsive and effective system that supports recovery, autonomy, and long-term stability for clients.





# ***Cooperation in Amsterdam's Social Support System***

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## ***Central Government***

- Sets legal frameworks: Housing Act, Social Support Act (WMO), Participation Act
- Provides funding through block grants to municipalities
- Regulates rent allowances, health insurance, and social benefits

## ***Municipality of Amsterdam***

- Translates national policy into local action plans
- Funds and commissions care, housing, and support services
- Coordinates access to social housing, urgent placements, and integration programs
- Works closely with providers to address homelessness, mental health, and poverty

## ***Social Service Providers***

- Deliver frontline support: housing, guidance, recovery, participation
- Operate under contracts or subsidy agreements with the municipality
- Provide expertise, data, and feedback to inform policy development
- Collaborate in multi-agency teams to support complex cases





# ***Social Housing in Amsterdam***

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Affordable (usually below €880/month in 2025), regulated rental housing for low- and middle-income residents. Around 60% of Amsterdam's housing stock.

## **Who's Involved?**

Housing Associations

- Own & manage most social housing
- Funded through rents & housing sales

Municipality of Amsterdam

- Sets local housing targets, manages urgent housing cases, coordinates care for vulnerable groups

Central Government

- Regulates rents & housing benefits (huurtoeslag), provides legal framework

## **How is it Funded?**

- Self-financed by housing associations
- Rent allowances for tenants via national government
- Occasional subsidies for new builds, sustainability, or land development

## **Access and Allocation**

- Apply via WoningNet
- Based on income, household size, and waiting time
- Priority for urgent cases via municipality



# ***Intermediary Renting to Care Providers***



A housing model where housing corporations rent homes to care organizations, who sublet them to vulnerable clients with support.

## **Housing Corporation**

- Rents the home to the care provider
- Maintains main contract, not with the client

## **Care Provider**

- Becomes main tenant
- Sublets to client with support services
- Manages tenancy and addresses issues

## **Client**

- Lives in the home under a sublease or user agreement
- Receives guidance (e.g. finances, mental health, daily living)
- Builds toward independent living

## **Why It Works**

- Fast housing access for people without registration time
- Stable housing combined with professional support
- Reduced risks for landlords—care provider takes responsibility
- Step toward full independence for the client



# ***FIBU***

## ***Financial assistance for vulnerable Amsterdammers***

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FIBU was set up in mid-2003 to support mostly addicted Amsterdammers on welfare benefits in coping with money by paying the fixed expenses and reserving for expected costs. Since then, FIBU also supports Amsterdammers with other income and other (multi)problems, and debt assistance has been added to its services.





# *The center of Expertise*

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The Centre of Expertise translates innovative and effective approaches into creative tools and training with practice-based knowledge and experience.

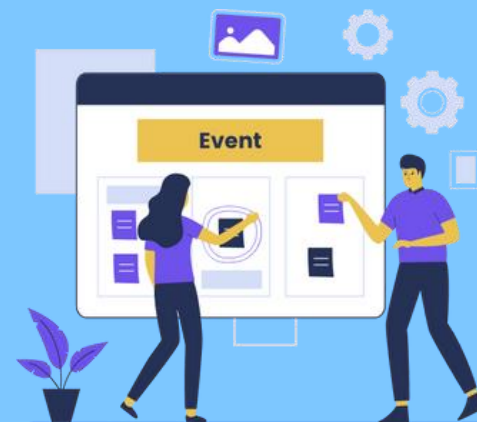
By sharing this on local, national and international level by and with employees within the sector, we inspire and facilitate them to provide the best possible recovery-oriented care to clients.



**Sharing knowledge**



**International learning**



**Events with social impact**





# Strength-Based Methodology $\epsilon$ Housing First

We believe in the strength of people, both clients and staff. We focus on abilities rather than limitations, guided by the concept of positive health and personal goals.

Our care approach is built on five core strength principles:

**Connection** – Professional closeness and equality

**Belief** – Trust in each other's expertise and professionalism

**Strength** – Emphasizing talents and capabilities

**Autonomy** – Supporting self-direction while recognizing risks

**Together** – Collaborating with clients' networks and colleagues



# ***An innovative approach 'It can also be different'***

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***A creative solution  
that can be applied in  
difficult situations that  
demand an alternative way***

- To build a better relation
- Celebrate milestones
- Difficult cases
- Negativity / Nuisance





# Profiles

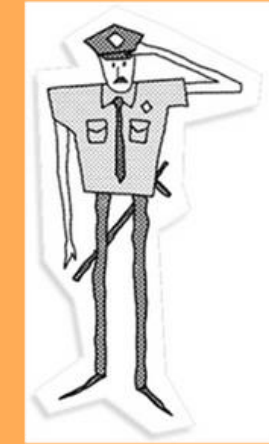
Caretaker



Teacher



Officer



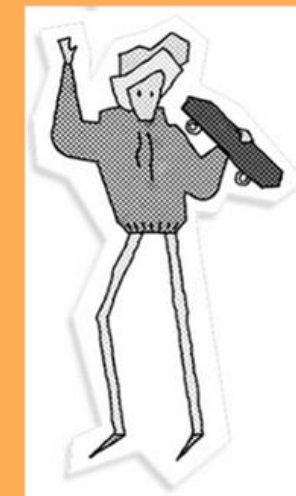
mediator



Creative  
person



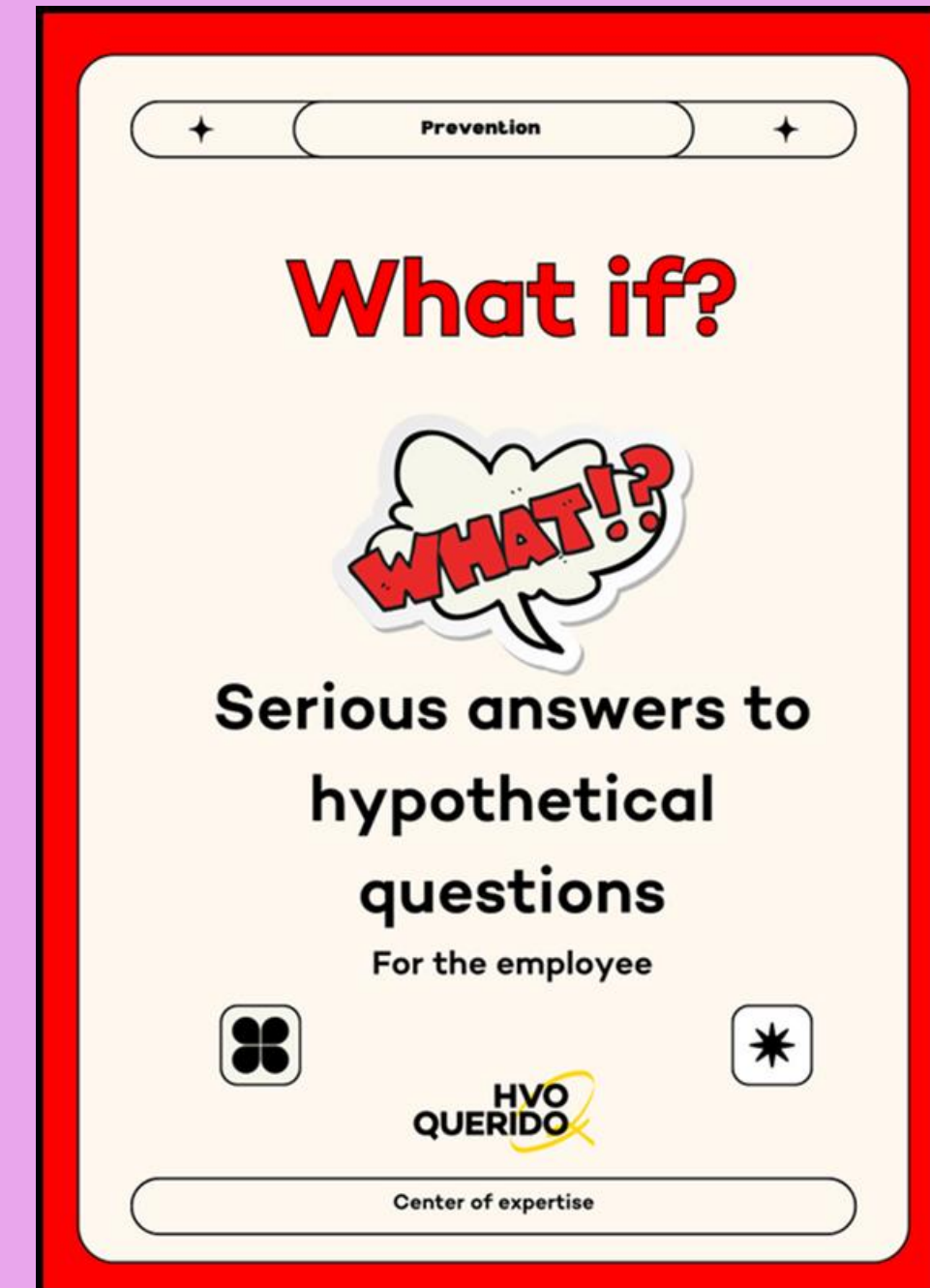
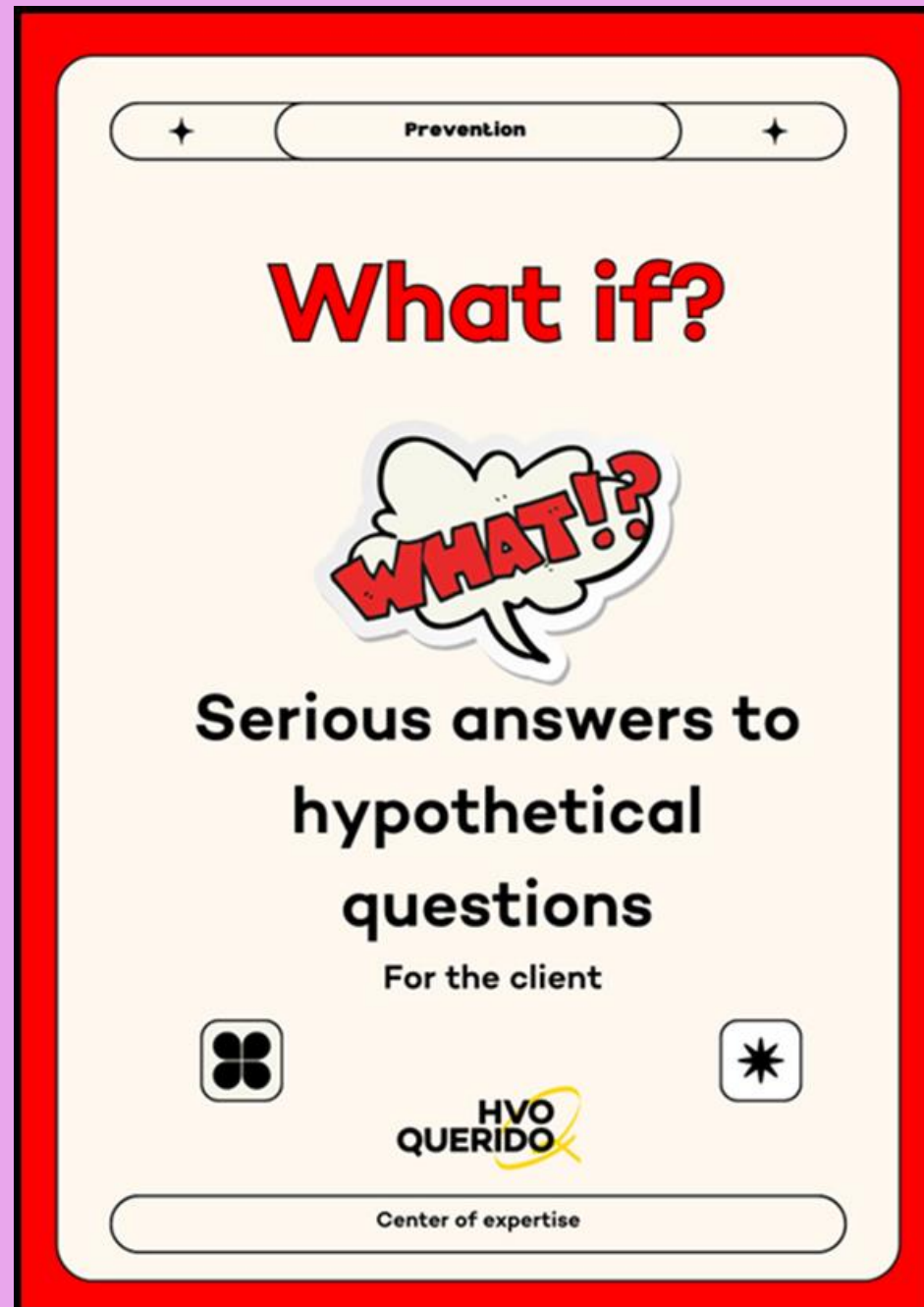
Buddy





It's always a parallel  
proces





Harm  
Reduction









# It's always a paralel proces

Harm  
Reduction

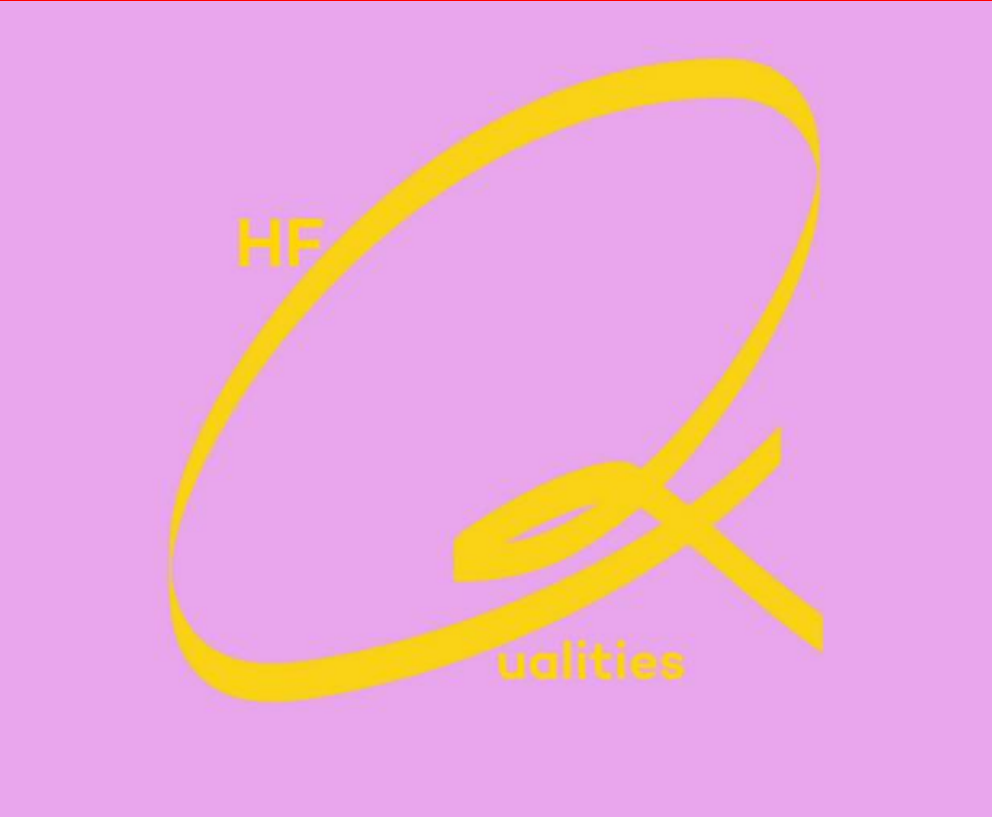
HVO QUERIDO			ACTIONS TO CHARGE THE BATTERY - RECOVERY	
	CLIENT	SUPPORT WORKER		
	WHAT IS YOUR BEHAVIOR WHEN "THINGS ARE WRONG"?	SHARE WHAT THE SUPPORT WORKER CAN DO WHEN "THINGS ARE WRONG" 		
	WHAT IS YOUR DAY-TO-DAY LIKE WHEN "THINGS AREN'T GOING WELL"?	EXPLAIN HOW THE SUPPORT WORKER CAN RECOGNIZE SIGNALS WHEN "THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL"		
	WHAT IS YOUR BEHAVIOR LIKE WHEN "EVERYTHING IS FINE"?	TELL WHAT THE SUPPORT WORKER CAN DO WHEN "EVERYTHING IS FINE"		

HVO QUERIDO			ACTIONS TO CHARGE THE BATTERY - PREVENTION	
	SUPPORT WORKER	MANAGER		
	WHAT IS YOUR BEHAVIOR WHEN "THINGS ARE WRONG"?	SHARE WHAT THE SUPPORT WORKER CAN DO WHEN "THINGS ARE WRONG" 		
	WHAT IS YOUR DAY-TO-DAY LIKE WHEN "THINGS AREN'T GOING WELL"?	EXPLAIN HOW THE SUPPORT WORKER CAN RECOGNIZE SIGNALS WHEN "THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL"		
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# LEARNING CAN BE FUN

## Serious Gaming



Serious gaming is crucial in inspiring others, as it combines engagement with impactful learning, encouraging creativity, problem-solving, and empathy in ways that traditional methods often cannot.





*Thank you for your time!*

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