



# THE COUNSELING SERVICE: THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CITIZENS



## External image/Accessibility

Citizens who contact us shall have easy access to the service. It is therefore necessary to clearly advertise:

- ✓ Opening days and hours of the service
- ✓ Telephone number(s)
- ✓ Fax
- ✓ Email(s)
- ✓ Physical address

## External image/ Continuity and stability

Citizens **count on** us, let's not disappoint them!

Just a few tips:

- ✓ Respect timetables and opening days (it is better to open one day less a week but ensure the declared service rather than announce a prolonged opening but do not respect it).
- ✓ Inform in advance of any schedule changes

# The relationship with citizens. The counselor's "mission"

To offer users a good service it is necessary that counselors have clear in mind their functions.

Let's try to list some of them:

A counselor must:

- ✓ Have clear in mind fields of interventions of CA and do not deviate from these in order to provide an answer at all costs.
- ✓ Listen to citizens
- ✓ Inform and guide citizens
- ✓ Act as a facilitator between citizens and third parties who can solve their case.



## The relationship with citizens.

### The identikit of citizens who appeal to CA

When citizens turn to CA to ask for help and protection, they usually are/feel:

- ✓ Suspicious (they have already had a lot of rejections and disappointments, so they are afraid of receiving others)
- ✓ Confused and disoriented (they cannot work out the problem and often fail to expose it with clarity)
- ✓ Disappointed
- ✓ Selfish (they believe they are the only ones with that problem and that their problem has priority over all others)



## The relationship with citizens. What citizens expect from CA

- ✓ Attention and understanding
- ✓ An immediate solution to the problem
- ✓ CA's direct intervention to solve the problem
- ✓ A "visibility" of their report(s) provided by the intervention of CA.



## The relationship with citizens. What citizens can obtain from CA

- ✓ clear and punctual information about their rights and the protection procedures (*information service*)
- ✓ help with a specific case, or for the development of a specific procedure (*advisory service*)
- ✓ the intervention of Cittadinanzattiva (when it comes to cases involving the community) through thematic and awareness campaigns (*Intervention service*)



## **The relationship with citizens. What citizens can't obtain from CA**

Citizens cannot have the assistance of a patronage, that is they cannot delegate to the service all the practices and procedures concerning them: for example, registered mails, complaints, filing of tax returns, etc.





## **The relationship with citizens. The citizen and the counselor**

The first “contact” between the counselor and citizens is crucial for

- ✓ the counselor’s understanding of the issue
- ✓ Trust-building from the citizens’ side

## **The relationship with citizens. The citizen and the counselor**

It is the more “delicate” stage for counselors, because in addition to the professional skills, they need to make extensive use of **relational and listening skills as well as spirit of initiative**

# The relationship with citizens. The type of requests

Reports may vary. There are simple ones (e.g. a request for information) to which the counselor can give an immediate response, and complex ones that require further study.



## How do we work?

- ✓ We analyse carefully the description of facts reported by citizens.
- ✓ We complete citizens' descriptions with the documents provided.
- ✓ We follow a logical thread to reconstruct the facts. For instance we organise patients' complaints, answers provided by company/ health provider/ relevant institutions/ medical committee, etc.
- ✓ We identify the right violated and the best protection procedure to adopt

# Complex requests: establishment of a back office

- ✓ Complex requests require the support of the back office
- ✓ This is the most delicate stage of the counseling service because of the intervention of several experts (e.g. coroner, lawyer, specialists, etc.)

