



EVA bxl, Belgium

Culturally sensitive care ambassador training for immigrants

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How does it work?

The training to be a culture-sensitive care ambassador is a six-month programme that consists of training in a group (2 days per week), workplace learning (1 day per week), and both one-on-one coaching and peer-group meetings. In this table, you will find an overview of the course timetable:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY 9am–4pm	WEDNESDAY 9am– 12:30pm	THURSDAY 9am–4:30pm	FRIDAY 9am–12:30pm
TOPIC		CARE MODULE - Introduction to the care sector - Working with families - Culturally sensitive work	LANGUAGE MODULE	INTERNSHIP	SOCIAL ORIENTATION MODULE - Communication - Dealing with conflicts - ICT
ORGANISATION		Group Intro Brussels	CBE Brusselleer	Care organisation	CBE Brusselleer

When drawing up the schedule, we took into account the family situation of many participants. Therefore, the courses do not start before 9 o'clock and do not end after 4pm. The training takes place at a day centre for seniors, which enables participants to make contact with elderly people easily.

A more in-depth description of the content of each module (Care, Language, and Social Orientation) is provided below.

Module 1: Care

- **An introduction to the care sector:** the context of care facilities and the development of essential competencies in the care sector (reliability, respect, and empathy)
 - An introduction to the care sector, based on the stories of informal carers
 - Visits to elderly-care organisations such as day centres for seniors, residential care centres, home care services, and community health centres



- (these visits give the participants a broader and more precise picture of the health-care landscape; moreover, the visits provide an opportunity for exchange of experiences with other care professionals with regard to the journey to becoming a culture-sensitive care ambassador)
- A social map of the organisations in Brussels
 - Accessibility of the services
 - Work attitudes
- **Working with families:** experience of (home) care services, understanding the questions of the elderly, making connections with families in need of care from vulnerable neighbourhoods in Brussels, and building a relationship of trust
 - Tasks of an assistant nurse
 - Testimony from the family about the process within the family of bringing in formal care in addition to home care
 - Communication: an introduction, verbal and non-verbal communication, a listening posture and empathy, active listening, giving and receiving feedback, effective communication, and hands-on exercises
 - Networks: involving and broadening, and the meaning of a network
 - The perceptions and social context of senior citizens
 - Deontology: setting professional boundaries and dealing with difficult situations
 - **Cultural sensitivity and culturally sensitive care:** basic knowledge of other cultures, dealing with multiple stakeholders, awareness of different frames of reference, and dialogue and interaction as basic skills within the framework of cultural sensitivity and culturally sensitive care
 - Who am I? – multiplicity of identity
 - An ecogram
 - One's frame of reference: values, and norms – dealing with other frames of reference
 - Gathering and interpreting information collected in different ways
 - Dealing with resistance among users and caregivers
 - Exchange with senior citizens who have a migration background, in combination with self-organisation and through participants' own network
 - Intake and confidence-building
 - Exchanges with intercultural mediators

Module 2: Language

- **Speaking and conversing**
 - Making sure the participant can...
 - request and provide information via informative textual material
 - request and provide information via prescriptive textual material



- articulate personal experience and ask about the experience of the interlocutor via informative text
 - articulate his or her experience and ask about the experience of the interlocutor via persuasive text
 - provide a summary of informative textual material
 - report on an event through informative text
 - express an opinion or a point of view and ask questions about other people's perceptions by means of persuasive text
- **Listening**
- Preparing the participant to...
 - find out the main idea of a piece of informative text
 - search for specific information in informative text
 - understand all the data in prescriptive textual materials
 - give an opinion on informative text
 - give an opinion on persuasive text

Module 3: Social orientation

- **Communication**
- Preparing the participant to...
 - illustrate verbal and non-verbal communication
 - illustrate objective and subjective perceptions
 - test his or her interpretations against those of others
 - express him- or herself in 'I' form
 - listen actively
 - give appropriate feedback
 - use a suitable form of communication
 - ask open questions
 - be open-minded and constructive in expressing his or her wishes and feelings within relationships and be able to set and accept limits in this
 - comply with the unspoken rules that characterise the interactions in the society
 - deal respectfully with the differences between people and life views
- **Dealing with conflicts**
- Making sure the participant is able to...
 - use techniques to prevent communication difficulties
 - deal with communication difficulties
 - accept differences and attach importance to respect and caring within a relationship
 - admit his or her mistake and apologise



- recognise prejudices, stereotyping, manipulation, and abuse of power
- devise constructive resolutions to conflicts
- be resilient
- deal with emotions
- **‘Learning to learn’**
 - Ensuring that the participant knows how to get around in Brussels (mobility)
 - Preparing the participant to...
 - orient him- or herself
 - read a plan
 - plan and/or organise the course material, training, internship, workshops, etc.
 - create a summary and/or report – he or she will be able to gain the most important information from a conversation and find a way to register / report on / notify about it
- **An introduction to ICT**
 - Preparing the participant to...
 - apply digital skills in functions related to a job application: creating an e-mail account, completing a digital form, and using social media
 - use a smartphone
 - create and manage an e-mail account
 - read a map and use Google Maps

Furthermore, the training is recognised by the public employment service of Flanders, Belgium. Therefore, participants receive some small benefits, such as reimbursement for the costs of child care and public transport.

The training is based on a constructivist perspective. The participant’s **personal experiences, life stories, interaction**, and active **participation** are key to this training. Application of the concept of **peer learning**, learning from each other as equals, is stimulated throughout the training.

By engaging in open dialogue, participants become aware of their own frame of reference. It goes without saying that this does not always go smoothly. Conversations about one's migration experience are sometimes difficult and painful. However, throughout the training, the participants learn to deal with other beliefs, other social environments, and other behaviours in a respectful way. **Workplace learning** therefore provides a safe and perfect environment for practising this in a professional way: open conversation, no ready-made or definitive answers, understanding other people's choices, etc.



During the training, participants often go on **field trips**. This enables participants to place the concepts and ideas discussed in class in a real-world context. Furthermore, participants can exchange and discuss both thoughts and opinions with the staff of the organisation.

The strength of the training lies in getting to work with the competencies, talents, and ambitions of the participants. Past participants indicate that they are proud of what they have achieved, that they gained **self-confidence**, and that they are ready to take new steps to strengthen themselves professionally. This training offers them more than an orientation to the care sector; the training also makes the participant stronger as a person.

After the training, participants will be guided by their teacher to find a suitable job or additional training in the care sector. During the follow-up, participants further explore and document their skills and talents, and they discover their dream job. Each participant will be accompanied for six months by the teacher.