



# Being a counsellor

in a **Cité des métiers**



Réseau

**cités**  
des Métiers





# The counsellor: a position at the centre of the Cité des métiers



A Cité des métiers' mission is to offer users all possible means to develop and achieve their career objectives and to support them in their choices.

To that end, all of the partners, who have complementary goals and come from qualified institutions representing different fields of orientation and working life, work together to create a combination of multi-partner skills. The counsellors of a Cité des métiers intervene in a counselling centre based on their skill area, without revealing their professional origin.

Counsellors play an extremely important role in the Cité des métiers area by promoting users' self-directed efforts to develop their career paths. Thus the counsellors encourage each user to seek out additional perspectives by using the various centres of expertise and sources of information along with meetings with sector professionals. As stipulated in the charter, the user is received without an appointment or registration and his anonymity is guaranteed.



## **The counsellor connects** a person to his project.

He introduces himself as **someone who provides resources and services** intended to develop the autonomy of the users who come to see him. The services are proposed in the form of individual interviews, collective actions or even forums or partner meetings.

In this way counsellors **show an interest in all occupational areas**. In order to guarantee a plurality of points of view, they participate in a process of sharing knowledge and skills.

The common point for all of these participants remains the **information and orientation counselling activity** with two characteristics:

**the user is at the centre of the system** and his anonymity must be respected. To do this, the counsellor adopts a **specific position** and a constant professional approach that go together with **sharing one's know-how and skills**.

**The Cité des métiers counsellor** intervenes during the first visit and recommends one or more Counselling centres. For example:

**"Choose your orientation"**

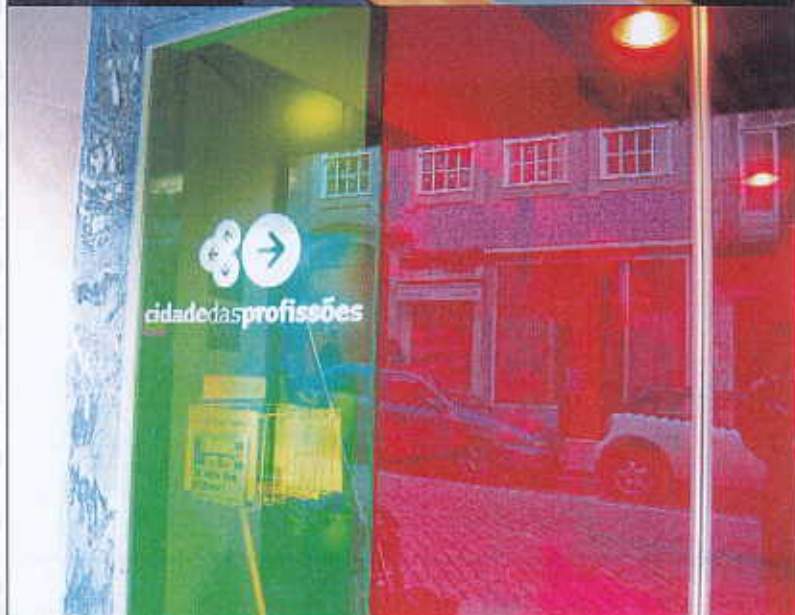
**"Organise your career path and training"**

**"Find a job"**

**"Change your work, evolve and validate your experience"**

or even **"Create your business"** or **"Know your rights."**





The counsellor's interview skills, his ability to self-document and his continually updated knowledge of local players in the territory enable him to assess his public's information needs and control his counselling in his area. He consolidates this know-how based on the specific character of his initial and ongoing training and his professional experience acquired outside the Cité des métiers context.

Likewise, up-to-date knowledge of the job and training market free the counsellor from his own biases so he can provide objective information.

Finally, an in-depth understanding of the missions and functions of the territory's players is key to the quality of counselling along with knowledge of the national, and even European, measures concerning employment, business creation, vocational training and lifelong orientation.

A counsellor in his centre, he is also called on to organise specific workshops in response to users' needs.

He organises workshops, forums and clubs dealing with the Cité des métiers themes and objectives.

He may also be led to perform his duties in a partner centre.



Through his membership in a specific structure and with a wealth of experience in a typical field in the orientation, employment or training sector, **the counsellor is an information specialist who can intervene on themes in one or more counselling desks.** His generalist skills combined with good knowledge of the Cité des métiers' resources, which is required to work in the Cité des métiers, enable the counsellor to also participate in general Reception.

**The counsellor's skills** let him **design and develop new products corresponding to users' needs.**

The particularity of the Cité des métiers counsellor is that he receives people without an appointment and **without any visible institutional badge**, which lets the user speak more freely.

There is no institutional stake, no obligation to follow certain processes or to maintain related rights and not even an access quota.

**The Cité des métiers counsellor offers to work with the user** in a process of exchanges to find the best possible solution.



## Key points

- Focus on the user's request, question and problem
- Place the user in a proactive and voluntary process that enables him to take ownership of an action strategy
- Respect the plurality of points of view and approaches
- Help the user develop his own career empowerment plan

## A few key words to remember

anonymity

confidentiality

benevolent neutrality

empathy

congruity

summarise

reformulate

encourage

explain

make legible

improve the image

personalise

do not stigmatise

## INTERVIEW

**Frédéric Fanciullacci** *coordinator/leader of the job centre at the Cité des métiers of Marseille - Provence - Alpes - Côte d'Azur*  
"a Cité where everyone is accepted" - <http://www.citedesmetiers.fr>

"Like two of my colleagues on full-time secondment here, I come from a Job centre and work in the Cité des métiers' "Find a job" desk.

A particularity of our Cité is that 100 counsellors on secondment (PLIE, Job centre, Pole 13, Local Mission, CNIDF and AFIJ) take turns on duty, primarily by half-days.

I am in charge of managing the team in the "Find a job" desk and training new arrivals. ...

Of course, we would like to have a more stable team, especially since some people only come here once a month... but it is an organisation that accepts different points of view and different diagnoses; in the end this little extra outweighs the disadvantages.

For our teams, the Cité des métiers is the opportunity to rub shoulders with other publics than those they are used to mixing with and they tend to experience it as an asset and an extension of their skills.

Besides that, I personally handle the seniors. I have created a specific workshop and I lead the job search club for people 45 years and older. In it we work on the CV theme, analysing the hidden market, specific support systems for seniors and a group coaching oriented method. It is also a mean of staying in direct contact with the realities of my profession.

With the new reorganisation of the former ANPE, which has become the Job centre, the Cité des métiers of Marseille is virtually the only one to receive people on a walk-in basis.

We tell our counsellors not to forget where they come from, but above all to live like someone offering services."



# The consulting activity in the Cité des métiers



## **The user is at the centre of the system**

The counsellor's role is to help people and to make sure they understand and share what they are told so they can implement strategies adapted to their situation. The user must be able to find the means to exercise his right to lifelong training and orientation and, to that end, identify the systems he can aspire to. The interview takes place in a relationship of confidence.

## **Users' two types of request**

- The need for a particular service or tool
- A specific question at a given time in the person's career

## **The counselling interview**

In the first phase of the interview, the communication posture (user/professional) is fundamental.

The goal is to quickly create a climate of confidence and put the user at ease.

To do this, each of the participant's roles have to be specified and an interview framework and objectives have to be established.

## **Interview phases**

- First meeting
- Listen, reformulate and exchange
- Propose possible choices
- Research avenues, action plan, etc.
- Summarise and close the meeting



### Interview framework

It should encourage the user's personal development and in particular enable him to:

- develop self confidence,
- improve self esteem,
- increase his autonomy, and
- satisfy his curiosity.

### Key concerns and issues

- Provide a reassuring interview setting: anonymity, confidentiality, benevolent neutrality and time
- Listen to the requests and projects put forth: name the key points of the project or request and show you understand them in order to create a sense of confidence
- Thoroughly explain a measure or system related to occupational integration, training, employment and business creation: make sure the prerequisites, consequences, etc. are clear
- Explain the educational methods for the personalised courses: summarise and reformulate.
- Pay attention to requests for orientation to intermediary organisations or specialised professionals (social assistance, associations, psychologists, etc.).
- Indicate the possibility to come back as often as they want: use encouraging phrases (e.g.; "You will always be received by someone").
- Propose the best relay organisation: mobilise and use the partnerships, know how to orient to the best partner whose services correspond best with the user's need

### Postures

- Empathy – availability – benevolent listening
- Take the desire into account and help the person go from dream to a doable project.
- Recognise the person as competent so he can see himself in the future.
- Quickly identify the stakes and in particular:
  - identify why he has asked for the interview
  - restate an element from his talking points in order to get him to clarify his thoughts
  - pay attention to how he formulates his request and needs
- Rely on his abilities and in particular:
  - do not stigmatise the difficulties, but know how to identify them
  - tick off the experience and skills useful to the project
  - identify potential difficulties with apprenticeship
  - promote success in order to develop with the person new and attainable perspectives





## POINT OF VIEW OF:

**Nicolas Deguerry** *Info Centre – counsellor in the “Organise your career path and training” desk in the Cité des métiers of Paris*

“In the counselling profession, one needs to be especially vigilant about the place given to the implicit. Indeed, persuaded that the other knows, we may end up preventing him from saying that he doesn’t know. This vigilance is necessary because what isn’t said can generate misunderstandings. Presuppositions have an adverse effect on the relationship between the counsellor and the user. Thus, when I take for granted that the user knows such or such system or measure, I don’t leave him any room to communicate about his potential difficulties and he may not have the courage to tell me what he doesn’t know.

There are many questions of all kinds. If the counsellor has to respond, he shouldn’t attempt to find a solution at any price, especially for a stated difficulty. His response would only be his own view of the problem and it wouldn’t let the user participate in the search for a solution. It isn’t a matter of deciding in place of the user, but rather giving him the means to find his solution completely on his own. You will be called on to reformulate the request and use the entire range of simple interview techniques.”

## THE COUNSELLOR'S WORK, AS SEEN BY ...



**Pascaline Albaret** (CNED), coordinator in the "Organise your career path and training" desk in the Cité des métiers of Paris

"What changes here is that anonymity is reciprocal. I receive people on a walk-in basis and I don't need to know their name or introduce myself under the banner of any institution. Both of us avoid the mutual introduction and the tiresome questions that are often attached to it. I don't formalise any contracts or control the user's future steps. Of course I can invite him to use our documentary resources, our workshops and even encourage him to come back as often as necessary. This freedom of speech, the

lack of control and superfluous formalism is certainly the best precondition to establishing confidence and discussion as well as saving time, so we can focus on the essential: delivering information to the user.

In the centre, we receive on a walk-in-basis without an appointment. You won't see a stopwatch on my desk, which doesn't stop me from paying attention to what is happening around me and especially in the waiting line, which can lengthen in one go. In a way, I make sure that my user is satisfied without discouraging the next one... This is sometimes quite a balancing act.

The positive point is that we constantly question our practices to adapt ourselves to the requests we receive and that aren't always foreseeable, far from it... Here, versatility takes on its full meaning because the user can approach my counselling desk, rather than another one, only because he sees that I am available. Thus I will receive him without pre-judging the relevance of his choice regarding the counselling desk he approaches. This work requires excellent coordination of teams, mutual support and even instinct.

We can't let a desk become congested next to another one that is empty, even just for a few minutes... minutes that are always long for the person waiting. To achieve this ideal fluidity, we have to constantly challenge ourselves by relying in particular on the complementarity of all of the counsellors. We continually strive for the best balance between the one-on-one time with the public and the need to exchange, share knowledge and resources and find the time for training.

That's what I like in my work; going back and forth between the field and theory, that's how one grows..."



# Developing common projects with other partners

## The range of counselling activities in Cités des métiers

### The counsellor is a member of a team... open to others

Whether it is in our membership structure or in the counselling reception at the Cité des métiers, we use, build and develop multiple skills in interaction with the various resources nearby, including our colleagues' resources first of all – their knowledge, know-how and behavioural skills – just like the resources of their membership structure, but not just these resources... Everything is done to share documentary tools, information media and software; in a word, everything that the partnership can pool together. If the Cité des métiers has its own resources, it can only be enriched by outside contributions and initiatives.

This partner knowledge isn't just available for one person; it can be combined infinitely in the group.

If a counsellor's skill is based on knowledge acquired through initial and continuing education, it continues to grow and be enriched on the many different occasions the counsellor exercises his profession, as well as in some extra-professional or personal activities. This is also how it can be transferred. One has to know how to choose, mobilise and combine resources to act relevantly.



## A few key words

### to remember

#### Personal resources:

knowledge

know-how

qualities, culture

emotional resources

#### Network resources

data banks

tools

documentary works

expertise networks...

#### Environmental resources:

organisation

equipment...

**Working in a Cité des métiers** also involves listening to the outside world and not isolating oneself. There is a multitude of projects to develop related to the territory. If a counsellor benefits from the knowledge shared inside his work area, he can still develop his skills by relying on the international network's experience and opening up to the need for other forms of outside collaboration and thereby working close to the field.

#### Skills can be continuously developed by:

- continuously updating knowledge through workgroups and winter school productions
- meeting frequently with Cité des métiers partners in workshops on exchanging professional practices and professional development on work-related themes
- sessions to exchange and analyse practices in Cité des métiers teams
- counsellors' professional development (individual and collective)
- teams' participation in the professional knowledge exchange network of the International Cité des métiers network
- teams' participation in projects outside the Cité des métiers

## INTERVIEW



**Hélène Cardoni** *information officer at the Cité des métiers in the La Rochelle basin*

"I had the opportunity to get acquainted with the Cité des métiers network from the first days when I took up my position. A meeting of network information officers had been scheduled in Belfort for May 2009 on the occasion of two days focused on exchanging documentary practices. Thanks to the presence of some 20 Swiss and French Cité des métiers information officers, I had the opportunity to get acquainted with the network and to introduce myself to them, in a friendly setting. What struck me was the general willingness to share, to pool everyone's practices, while taking the necessary time to reflect about these "good practices." Everyone's personal interpretation was beneficial for the group. Subsequently, I had many opportunities to contact my counterparts in the Nanterre and Rouen Cités des métiers. Each time I contacted them, they were spontaneously ready to help and friendly. Thanks to them, the principle of cooperation between us and with the counsellors has always been evident."





## INTERVIEW



### **Carolina Ferreira and Palmira Santos**

*counsellors in the Cité des métiers of Porto*

<http://cdp.portodigital.pt/>

"I was recruited after several rounds of interviews... and confirmed in my position after a nine-month practical internship. What I like here is that we learn from others, plus the variety of requests

enriches us. It is a real plus," explains Carolina, an occupational psychologist.

"Myself, I come from human resources. I am what one calls in the jargon an organisational psychologist. Before coming to the Cité des métiers, I was my own boss. Thus it is a big change, because here it is teamwork above all. We share knowledge, there is creativity and so many projects to develop," continues Palmira. Both share this definition of their Cité des métiers: a young Cité des métiers, led by a young and creative team.

"If the services we offer are not different from other Cités des métiers, we strive to respond to the most specialised requests, like questions on international training," explains Carolina.

"... We also endeavour to work in tune with local situations. Not far from here there is a business incubator. Employees have a real expectation for counselling and express needs for training, career development and new skills. The Cité des métiers has a role to play..."

"It's true, there is plenty to do! But since we are all very close, that helps and I believe this frame of mind is felt in the field," underlines Palmira, who would like to see her Cité grow. So, to join this "dream team," they say with a laugh: "ideally, a creative and dynamic person who wants to grow with us."

# A reference list of skills

## Conducting the interview

1. Receive all publics in an intercultural setting.
2. Anticipate requests and adapt the level of search to users' knowledge and technical characteristics.
3. Analyse the request.
4. Master and implement the counselling interview techniques used in information transmission and assistance interview situations: the guided or semi-directive interview; the non-directive or semi-directive interview.
5. Clarify for users how one enters and stays in the working world by offering them "all means" to develop and achieve career objectives and support them in their choices.
6. Talk about the different fields of work, training, orientation and business creation.
7. Help the user develop action strategies.
8. Make users independent in their occupational integration path.
9. Respect the user's anonymity.
10. Promote the autonomous approaches initiated by users.
11. Make available additional multi-partner skills.

## Active listening

1. Listen: be available to the person talking: offer time, silence and concentration
2. Listen: refuse to judge, sort and choose: respect the person by respecting what is said. This is a matter of accepting not just what the person says about himself, but also his representation of the world. Stimulate if necessary: can you tell me more?
3. Listen: accept someone who cannot express clearly what he wants: The Cité des métiers area is built around this concept. The person is free to come, anonymity is respected and there is no institutional constraint (e.g.; to be sent here by an organisation as part of an institutionalised support). This area encourages a developing idea, built one step at a time. It is the user, based on the acquired information, who can develop his project... or not.
4. Listen: be able to catch what the user wants to say, what he has a hard time saying, what he may want to conceal or retain. Be able to repeat and summarise what the person has just said so he can better understand it himself: be able to use the reformulation techniques.
5. Use open questions: they make it easier for the user to voice his opinions. They give the counsellor the first indications of how the person sees his problem.
6. Be available (do not continue until you are saturated).

## Communication

1. Adapt to different publics.
2. Speak fluently and adapt your vocabulary and your behaviour to the situation.
3. Know how to change the level of vocabulary depending on whom you are speaking to.
4. Know how to use the computer tools wisely.

## Relational

1. Develop an interest, empathy, curiosity and tolerance for the user.
2. Have self-control and manage your emotions.
3. Give users confidence to appropriate the Cité des métiers area and resources.
4. Know how to negotiate.
5. Know how to manage time.
6. Communicate with the partners.
7. Work in a multi-partner and multi-lingual team.



## Collecting, processing and distributing multidisciplinary information

1. Get informed and documented and learn the knowledge and information concerning the different fields the user will ask questions about. These fields, locally and nationally, are confined to the area of occupational categories and cross-functional occupational families, employment and continuing education and can also call on other knowledge.
2. Check the sources of information.
3. Search the relevant information sources and interpret them in a documentary database that can be used to handle a question posed by a user.
4. Know the resource people who update this type of documentation and make it available.
5. Manage, supply and enrich the documentary base.
6. Keep up to date on employment or training actions that relate to territory development actions.
7. Know the different national, regional and local orientations in terms of integration, systems, measures and training.
8. Update your knowledge regarding economic development (businesses in the territory, labour market areas, new professions, job and skills management, etc.).
9. Know the accreditation for work experience (VAE) procedures.
10. Know the essential administrative procedures to enter the work world and training.
11. Know the rights to continuing education.
12. Develop a curious mind about all aspects of living in the territory.
13. Inform the public about the different centres.
14. Summarise the information.
15. Use the software specific to each Cité des métiers.
16. Have computer and organisational skills and know how to use databases.
17. Orient the publics and help them use the terminals.
18. Inform partners about the Cité des métiers' different activities.

## Knowledge of the work environment

1. Have a good understanding of the economic territory and the business world.
2. Master the orientation and job search techniques.
3. Master all steps from initial training to continuing education, the job search and business creation.
4. Have a good understanding of specific publics (students and dropouts) and their needs.
5. Have in-depth knowledge of the education system and training channels to help formulate projects.
6. Have knowledge of the legal aspect of vocational training.
7. Know the procedures for enrolling in the different organisations.
8. Spot and identify the requests and needs of users and counsellors and orient them in the Cité des métiers or outside.
9. Work as a team.

## Designing methods, educational products and tools

1. Design and develop new activities corresponding to users' needs (workshops, clubs, encounters-discussions, forums, profession spotlights, etc.).

