



Eigen Kracht-conferentie for individuals and families

Forming plans together...  
Making decisions together...  
...about the future!

Sometimes people can no longer cope on their own. Events can be so overwhelming, complex or confusing in one's daily life that one would like a helping hand. How do you get that help? How do you stay in charge and have a say in the approach to that help? The Eigen Kracht-conferentie service can help you form a plan together with your family, friends and other involved parties to manage your problems. A plan in which everyone can participate and which serves as a guide for your future.

### **The Eigen Kracht-conferentie**

Most people make plans by themselves when they are experiencing problems. Sometimes, that approach is just not enough (anymore). In these times, the Eigen Kracht-conferentie process (also known as Family Group Conference) is one way to manage your problems together with your family, friends, and other acquaintances. Your social network comes together on the basis of a concrete, but open-ended question. For example: 'What is needed so that the child, or children, can grow up safely? What does the person need to live independently? How can they avoid becoming lonely now that they are less mobile?' Experiences, concerns, ideas and solutions are all shared during the Eigen Kracht-conferentie in order to form a plan of action.

### **Independent Eigen Kracht Coordinator**

The Eigen Kracht Coordinator has an important role in bringing the participants and the necessary information together. The coordinator is not a social worker; they perform this service a few times per year alongside their normal work activities. The coordinator does not interfere with the situation itself and does not have any interest in the contents of the plan. The coordinator visits people in their homes to provide them with information and to inquire if there are other people available to participate in the conference process. The more ideas, the better the plan!

### **Building a bridge**

How to stay the course is not obvious when you are in need of help. The way that the professional world is

organized frequently does not match the reality of people's social environments, the way that they really live. The Eigen Kracht-conferentie serves as a bridge between professional organizations and families. The knowledge, experience and opportunities that the professional world has to offer are shared with individual people. The involvement, knowledge, and proximity of the individual people, aided by the information shared by organizations, helps the decision making process. That is how everyone can contribute to the new plan.

### **Preparations**

The Eigen Kracht Coordinator personally invites the participants to the conference and helps them prepare for it. The coordinator also asks which experts should provide more information so the participants can make good, informed decisions. If there are social workers already involved, they are usually invited to participate as well. The Eigen Kracht Coordinator asks all of the participants what they need in order to feel comfortable during the conference. Children - sometimes adults also - need to have someone who supports them during the Eigen Kracht-conferentie and helps them express what they want to say. In consultation with the Eigen Kracht Coordinator, the children choose who they want present at the conference to help them. The preparations for the conference last an average of six to eight weeks, but can take place in a week in emergency situations. The participants determine the pace.

### **Help from professionals**

Social workers provide information at the beginning

of the conference session. For example, information about the support available at the conference and any potential concerns or positive expectations the participants may have. This can also be information about the assistance, or a sickness, a disorder or a procedure. With compulsory assistance, the professional(s) involved - such as a family supervision worker or a probationary officer - can place some conditions on the plan. These conditions are shared with the participants at the start of the session.

### When and where?

The participants in the Eigen Kracht-conferentie agree on a time together. The conference frequently takes place during an evening or on the weekend because that is usually the most convenient for participants. A conference lasts an average of five hours but no end time is designated beforehand. The Eigen Kracht Coordinator and the participants all ensure that there is food and drink available. The conference is held in a neutral location where those present can talk as long as is necessary.

### What happens in the Eigen Kracht-conferentie?

1. Social workers are allowed to provide information and answer questions in stage 1 of the session. In the case of compulsory assistance, the professionals involved will explain at the session the criteria they have set for the plans. After this information- giving stage, all of the social workers and the Eigen Kracht Coordinator leave the room.
2. In stage 2 of the conference, the person(s) being helped are present along with their family, friends and acquaintances. They discuss the situation together in private, and determine what needs to happen in order to deal with it. The Eigen Kracht-

conferentie almost always results in a plan. The plan contains agreements that everyone present has accepted.

3. The last stage of the conference begins once the plan is ready. The Eigen Kracht Coordinator re-enters the room and asks if all of the agreements are clear for everyone. The coordinator does not interfere with the content of the plan! Next, the social worker involved is allowed to enter the room in order to receive the plan from the participants or, in the case of compulsory assistance, to review the plan before accepting it. The plan made by the parties is now the guide for the subsequent assistance.

### After the conference

The Eigen Kracht Coordinator ensures that everyone present receives the plan. This plan also specifies those people who will meet later to discuss how the plan is proceeding. After the Eigen Kracht-conferentie, the coordinator is no longer in the picture: his or her job is done. The control over the plan and the solutions thus lie where they belong: with the people themselves.

### Schedule an Eigen Kracht-conferentie

An Eigen Kracht-conference is possible in any situation where a plan is needed and where the parties involved are unable to formulate it themselves. A conference or an informal informatory interview can be scheduled by the person(s) requiring assistance, the people who are close to them, or by the social worker involved.

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