

Be the boss of your own life

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Introduction

Everyone in the Netherlands has the right to self-determination and control over their own life and body. This includes the right to choose your partner, to study, to use contraception, and to be part of any faith or religion – or not.

Sadly, there are people who find themselves in situations in which such rights are restricted. They are not allowed to control what happens to their lives and bodies. The right to self-determination is taken away by their family or social environment and they get into trouble if they go against that.

This brochure explains your rights in the Netherlands. It also offers information on what you can do when something like this happens to you and where you can go for help and advice.

HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE

What is it?

Honour-based violence happens within the family. Family members are angry because they don't agree with something you do. They are afraid that you are damaging the family's reputation.

Examples of honour-based violence:

- A girl is beaten because she ran away.
- A homosexual boy is forced to marry a girl.
- Parents lock their daughter up at home because she has a boyfriend.
- Parents leave a child behind abroad because they don't approve of his/her friends.
- A father takes the children away from their mother because she wants a divorce.
- An ex-husband doesn't allow his divorced wife to remarry.
- A boy kills his sister because she had sex before marriage.

"My boyfriend was furious when I told him I wanted to break up with him. He started telling other people that we already had sex, which was a lie. He also threatened me. That is when I went to the police. They really helped me."

What are your rights?

You are entitled to freedom and safety.

Honour-based violence is a criminal offence in the Netherlands. The punishment depends on what happened.

What can I do?

Are you a victim of honour-based violence? Or are you scared that this may happen to you? Go to the Available Support page 18 to see where you can get help or advice.

Are you in immediate danger? Then you should always call 112.

Talk to someone about your situation. For example, with a friend, your GP or a teacher. You can find more tips in the emergency plan on page 17.

Is your family controlling your life? Do you feel that your freedom has been taken away from you? Talk to your family. And if that doesn't help, you can try to ask for help from someone your family would listen to.

Victims of honour-based violence are sometimes left behind abroad. Make an emergency plan to flee if you feel that this may happen to you. Look for tips to do this on the emergency plan page.

If you are experiencing violence, you can apply for an independent residence permit. In this case, you will have to prove that you are abused. For instance, by taking photos of bruises and/or by filing a police report about the violence. The support organisation *Veilig Thuis* can help you with the application.

When you have left your partner or parents because of violence, your residence permit will remain valid for a maximum period of 1 year. That is why you need to apply for your independent residence permit. You should start the application within 4 weeks before your current permit expires. *Veilig Thuis* can help you with this.

Are you dealing with violence? You can go to a shelter. Call *Veilig Thuis* or *Sterk Huis* to organise this.

FORCED ABANDONMENT

What is it?

Forced abandonment means that someone is left behind abroad by their family or partner. This usually happens to children, young adults, or women (with or without children). The family or partner takes away the abandoned person's passport and other documents to prevent them from travelling back to the Netherlands.

There are different reasons for abandonment, such as:

- Your family and/or partner believes that you have damaged their honour.
- Your family thinks that you are hanging around with the wrong people.
- Your family wants you to marry someone of their choosing.
- Your family wants you to care for someone, like a family member, abroad.
- Your family wants you to be circumcised.
- Your partner wants to divorce you.

What are your rights?

When you are officially an adult (18+), you have the right to live anywhere you want. Forced abandonment of adults is considered domestic violence. Domestic violence is punishable by law.

Forced abandonment of children is considered child abuse. Child abuse is also punishable by law. The judge can decide that parents (temporarily) lose parenthood rights.

What can I do?

Victims often don't realise that they will be left behind. But, sometimes, there are indications that you may be able to pick up on, such as:

Your family is angry with you. They threaten and/or beat you.

You are no longer allowed to leave the house (alone) or call your friends.

Your family suddenly decides to go on holiday. There is no return ticket booked in your name.

You don't have a Dutch passport or your residence permit has expired.

Your passport or residence permit has been taken away from you.

Your family has already threatened to leave you behind if you carry on with your behaviour.

Are you afraid that you or someone else will be left behind? Go to the Available Support page 18 to see where you can get help or advice.

Are you in immediate danger? Call 112.

Call *Veilig Thuis*. They can help you.

Talk with someone about your situation. For example, with a friend, your doctor or a teacher.

You can find more tips in the emergency plan on page 17.

Try to stay in the Netherlands. Find help here. It is much harder to get help when you are already abroad.

Never give your passport or other important documents to someone else. Make copies of these papers and keep them hidden or give them to someone you trust.

Collect all your personal details before you leave. This includes having a passport photo, a copy of your passport, your address and your BSN number. Write down your story. Mail this to someone you trust. You should also email all the copies and your story to yourself if you have an email address.

Tell someone you trust about where you are going and give them the address if you have it.

Tell them also with whom you will stay and when you are expected to return.

Hide a spoon between your clothes when you are travelling by plane. This will ensure that the security personnel at the airport will notice you. They will pick you out for further checks and you can tell them what is happening to you.

Before you leave, you can go to www.ambassade.startpagina.nl or www.minbuza.nl to find the location of the nearest Dutch embassy (or consulate) in the country you are travelling to. Write down the address and phone number.

You can also download the ReisApp [travel app] of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the contact details of Dutch embassies. Write down the phone number as well, or memorise it, so you will still have the number if other people take your phone away.

"I was 17 when my parents left me abroad. They were angry because I had a boyfriend. My life out there was very bad. They came to take me back to the Netherlands after a year and we got help from a psychologist. Thankfully, things are better now."

Have you been left behind? Go to the Available Support page to see where you can get help or advice.

Call the *Landelijk Knooppunt Huwelijksdwang en Achterlating* [Dutch Centre of Forced Marriage and Abandonment] for advice and help. They can help you with travelling back safely to the Netherlands and arrange shelter for you here.

Contact the Dutch embassy. They can help you with a passport and/or return visa.

Contact the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Are you married? Share your story and fears with your aid worker.

Do you still have your passport and residence permit? Then you can travel back to the Netherlands by yourself.

Have you returned to the Netherlands? Go to the Available Support page to see where you can get help or advice.

Find a safe place where you can stay (temporarily). Call *Veilig Thuis*.

Did you get married while abroad? Then you can get a lawyer who will help you get a divorce.

Make sure that this is not the same lawyer that your partner has.

If you don't have your own income, you can contact your municipality to receive social welfare benefits (financial help).

FORCED MARRIAGE

What is it?

A forced marriage means that parents or other people pressure or force someone to get married (against their will). This pressure or force is not always obvious. It can be done by constantly speaking very positively about the person they want you to marry, for example. The enforcement can also be very clear when there are threats or even violence.

Do you feel that you cannot say 'no' to the proposed marriage? Or do you refuse but your family is not listening to you? Then this means you are being forced.

What are your rights?

You have the right and freedom to choose your partner.

Forced marriage is punishable by law. Offenders can get a maximum prison sentence of 2 years.

It is also a criminal offence to force a person who is not living in the Netherlands to marry. In the Netherlands, everyone first needs to get legally married before a religious marriage ceremony takes place. An imam, priest or rabbi commits a criminal offence when they conduct a religious marriage between people who are not yet legally married.

You must also be 18 years or older to get married in the Netherlands. Did you get married abroad? Then your marriage can only be legalised in the Netherlands if you are both 18 or older.

You are not allowed to marry a family member, like a parent, a grandparent, a child, a grandchild, a brother, a sister or an adopted sibling. Marriages between cousins are only allowed if you both choose to marry each other.

"My parents want me to marry a cousin from Egypt. But I want to study, and then I want to marry the person I love. If they force me to marry my cousin, I will run away or go to the police."

What can I do?

Go to the Available Support page 18 to see where you can get help or advice.

Are you in immediate danger? Call 112.

Trust your feelings. You will know in your heart whether you do or don't want to marry someone. If you don't want to marry, you need to make this very clear. Your no means no.

Don't marry to make your parents happy or to avoid fights. Tell them what you do want, like finishing your school or studies, work, or choosing your partner yourself.

If your family refuses to listen to you, you can ask for help from a family member or friend they will listen to.

Are you being threatened? Or are you unable to convince your parents? Go to page 17 and read about the emergency plan should you need to escape.

Explain to your parents that it is punishable by law to enforce a marriage.

Are your parents religious? Tell them that no religion or faith condones force.

Family members, or the police, can get a court order to stop a marriage from going ahead if they know or suspect that a person is being forced. Ask them for help.

The judge can also dissolve a forced marriage. This should be arranged with the help of a lawyer and within six months after your wedding day.

Were you forced into a marriage and do you wish to divorce, but is your partner refusing? Go to page 7 for more information on marital captivity.

MARITAL CAPTIVITY

What is it?

A woman is held captive in marriage when she wants to divorce but her husband refuses to cooperate. This happens mostly to women who are (still only) religiously married. They often manage to get legally divorced but they fail to dissolve the religious marriage because this needs the husband's cooperation. The result is that many women find it impossible to move on with their own lives.

What are your rights?

You have the right to divorce (from both a civil and religious marriage).

Marital captivity is punishable by law in the Netherlands.

The judge can obligate your partner to cooperate and consent to a religious divorce. He can be fined if he doesn't.

In the Netherlands, everyone first needs to get legally married before a religious marriage ceremony takes place. The Dutch law protects you and arranges several affairs for you if you get a divorce, such as money to take care of the children or how personal items are divided.

You cannot be married to more than one person.

What can I do?

Are you not yet married? Arrange the following to avoid being held 'captive' in a marriage later on.

Before you marry, you and your future partner should agree on important legal issues at a notary's office. A notary helps people to formally document such important agreements. You can also do this when you are already married. Agreements that you make with an imam, a priest or a rabbi are not legally binding in the Netherlands.

- ✓ You can agree that you both cooperate with a religious divorce in the Netherlands or abroad;
- ✓ You can agree that a legal divorce automatically results in a religious divorce;
- ✓ You can agree on the partner having to pay a fine if they don't cooperate;
- ✓ Other agreements can relate to the dowry.

Make sure that you don't sign any papers before you have carefully read the content. You can also have it checked by a lawyer. Are you being forced to sign? Then you can sign the document using a fake signature as it will not be valid.

If you are only religiously married, you will need to go to your municipality and get legally married.

"We were legally divorced but he refused to get religiously divorced. The judge forced him to cooperate. And now we are religiously divorced as well."

Are you held 'captive' in a marriage? Go to the Available Support page 18 to see where you can get help or advice.

Are you in immediate danger? Call 112.

Talk with someone about your situation. For example, with a friend, your doctor or a teacher. You can find more tips in the emergency plan on page 17.

Are you getting legally divorced? You can ask the court to make sure that your husband also cooperates with a religious divorce.

Does your residence permit state that you live with your partner? And do you want to get divorced because of domestic violence? Then you can apply for an independent residence permit. *Veilig Thuis* can help you with this.

FEMALE CIRCUMCISION (FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION)

What is it?

Female circumcision involves the partial or entirely cutting off of the external part of a girl's clitoris. The clitoris is a sensitive little lump in the upper part of the vagina. In some cases, the girl's labia are also cut away or sewed close. When this happens, she will only have a tiny hole through which she needs to pee and menstruate.

Female circumcision is extremely dangerous. The procedure can lead to heavy loss of blood and infections such as urinary tract infections. Girls can get very sick or even die. Circumcised women can also experience severe problems in their sex life.

Advocates of female circumcision can tell stories that are absolutely not true, such as:

Female circumcision makes it easier for women to get pregnant. Not true. Female circumcision may cause infections that can make it harder or impossible to get pregnant.

During childbirth, a baby can die when its head touches the clitoris. Not true. The clitoris is completely harmless for the baby.

The clitoris will grow larger if it is not cut. Not true.

What are your rights?

You have the right to self-determination and control over your own body.

Female circumcision or genital mutilation is a criminal offence. A person who carries out female circumcision or collaborates with it can get a maximum prison sentence of 12 years or a fine.

It is also illegal to force a girl living in the Netherlands to undergo circumcision abroad.

Everyone who collaborates can be punished. Also when they don't live in the Netherlands.

Circumcision of adult women (18+) is illegal as well. Even if she wants it herself.

Are you circumcised? You can file a police report up to the age of 38.

"I was eight years old when I was circumcised in Sudan. I thought that it was normal, that all the girls in the world were circumcised. Now I know that it is a very dangerous thing to do. Two years ago, my husband said that he wants my daughters to be circumcised too, but I refused to let that happen."

What can I do?

Are you circumcised and are you experiencing problems? Go to the Available Support page 18 to see where you can get help or advice.

Are you in danger or do you know someone who is? Call 112.

Ask your doctor for help. They can also refer you to a gynaecologist, a psychologist or a sex therapist. You will be safe there.

There are special consultation hours for circumcised women. This ensures that you can talk to a doctor who can help you. Go to www.fsan.nl to find information about consultation hours near you.

Talk about your problems. It may ease your mind. Find someone you feel safe with.

It is also possible to undergo reconstructive surgery. You can talk about it with your doctor.

Are you afraid that you or another girl will be forced to be circumcised? Go to the Available Support page to see where you can get help or advice.

Explain that female circumcision is dangerous and punishable by law. This also goes for the 'lighter' procedure. Do they refuse to listen? Ask for help from someone you trust.

In 2006, high-ranking imams all over the world declared that female circumcision should be banned. They also signed a statement to confirm this. Go to www.fsan.nl to find the document in various languages. Show this to your family.

Are you unwilling to have your daughter circumcised but is your family abroad pressuring you? Then you can bring a copy of the "Statement on Female Genital Mutilation" when you visit your country of origin. This document is issued by the government. It states that female circumcision is dangerous and a criminal offence in the Netherlands. You can have your family read it. Go to www.fsan.nl to find the document in seven languages.

CONTRACEPTION

What is it?

A woman who has sex with a man can get pregnant. Contraception is used to prevent this. By using contraception, you can decide whether you want to have children or not, when you want to have children and how many children you want.

There are all sorts of contraception, like the contraceptive pill, the IUD (intrauterine device, also called a coil), or the condom. Condoms also protect against venereal diseases like AIDS and chlamydia. Contraceptive pills are not just intended for sexually active women. They can also be prescribed against acne and menstrual pain. The website www.anticonceptievoorjou.nl offers more information about the different types of contraception.

When a man and woman have sex, the man can bring his penis into the woman's vagina. When the man ejaculates, semen comes out of the penis and enters the vagina, and this can make the woman pregnant.

What are your rights?

You have the right to self-determination and control over your own body. You decide if and when you want to use contraception and which type.

Nobody can force you to get pregnant. Anyone who forces you commits a criminal offence. In the Netherlands, the use of contraception is a right. Also when your residence permit states that you live with your partner.

Contraception is free for girls under 18. The website

www.zorgwijzer.nl/vergoeding/anticonceptie offers more information about the costs.

Another important thing to know is that your doctor or any other physician is forbidden to tell anybody what you discuss.

What can I do?

How can I get contraception?

Do you want to start using contraception? Then you need to go to your doctor. They will want to know which type of contraception would be best in your situation and will ask you some questions. After that, the doctor writes a prescription if you choose to use the pill and you take that prescription to the pharmacy to collect it.

"I was forced to marry my cousin. I want to divorce him and I don't want to have children with him. That is why I secretly use the contraceptive pill. I hide the box well so no one can find it."

Using contraception secretly

You are in charge of your own body. Even so, you may be in a situation where you don't want to tell anyone that you are using contraception. What do you have to be mindful of?

Regular **condoms** or **female condoms** (a condom that you place inside your vagina) are used when you are about to have sex. You can keep them at your partner's house if you don't live together. Condoms can be bought without a prescription, at supermarkets, drugstores and pharmacies, at petrol stations, or online.

When you take the contraceptive pill and you use it properly, you will still have your period. You need to hide the box well.

Contraceptive devices like the **IUD** or **rod** are implanted inside your body by a physician. Your partner will not be able to feel such a device. They can have side effects, like not having your period or getting lighter or heavier periods. Someone may notice that you use no or fewer sanitary pads.

You can also receive an **invoice for the contraception** at your home address. If you want to avoid that, you should notify your GP/physician, the pharmacy and the insurance company. Together you can come up with a solution for that.

The website www.femmesforfreedom.com offers more tips on how to use contraception secretly.

Did you have sex without contraception?

Are you a girl or a woman and did you have sex without using a condom or any other type of contraception? Then you may get pregnant. If you want to make sure that you don't get pregnant, you need to take the morning-after pill within 5 days after you had sex. You can buy the morning-after pill without a prescription at a drugstore or pharmacy.

If you find out you are pregnant, there are important decisions to be made. You can carry the pregnancy to full term after which you decide whether you want to keep the child or offer it for adoption. Another option is an abortion (terminating the pregnancy). Abortion is free for all women who live in the Netherlands. You have to contact your doctor if you consider an abortion.

"My friend is 32 years old and has seven children already. She hardly has any money to take care of her children. But her husband still refuses to let her use contraception."

Men and contraception

Sometimes, getting pregnant is not a good idea (yet). For example, because you don't earn enough money to raise a child. Or because the woman has just given birth. Even so, there are men who don't want their wives to use contraception. Or they don't want to consider it. It is important to talk about contraception together.

Tips for men:

You don't want to get an STD? You don't want to have a child? Then make sure you always use a condom when you have sex.

You and your partner can discuss this and decide on which type of contraception is best in your situation. You can visit your doctor together.

When your girlfriend/partner has to pay for her contraception, it is good to help pay for it. Men who have sexual relations with other men can use the so-called PrEP medication. PrEP are pills that protect against HIV infection when a man is free of HIV.

Talk with your child

Talking with your child about their body, sex, and contraception is crucial. Listen to your child. Give them the feeling that they can come to you to talk about anything, including these subjects. Go to www.femmesforfreedom.com for tips on how to have such talks with your child.

Do you need help or advice? Go to the Available Support page 18 to see who you can turn to.

True or false

Does using contraception make me infertile? No. You can get pregnant when you stop using contraception. It depends on the type of contraception you used how long that may take.

Can you still get pregnant if the man takes his penis out of the vagina before he ejaculates? Yes. Semen can enter the vagina before he ejaculates.

Does the contraceptive pill make you gain weight? Sometimes. With some women, their bodies retain more fluid when they take the pill. It can also increase your appetite. This doesn't happen always or with all contraceptive pill brands.

Can you get pregnant again when you are still breastfeeding? Yes. There is less chance of getting pregnant but it is possible.

Are there any downsides to contraception? Yes. All types of contraception have their pros and cons. You may get headaches when you first start using the contraceptive pill. The copper IUD can cause painful menstrual bleeding. Such side effects often cease after a while. Contact your doctor if they continue.

FREE CHOICE OF PARTNER

What is it?

In the Netherlands, everyone has the right to love and marry who they want. Gender, background, religion, skin colour, disability, finances, etcetera never matter.

What are your rights?

You have the right and freedom to choose your partner.

Same-sex marriage is legal in the Netherlands, so a woman can marry another woman and a man can marry another man.

"I'm in love with a man who has another faith. I'm really struggling. On one side, I have my parents who raised me according to our religion. And I have the perfect man on the other side. I just don't know what to do."

What can I do?

Does your family object to your choice of partner? Go to the Available Support page 18 to see where you can get help or advice.

The right to self-determination and the freedom to choose your partner are human rights. Explain this to your family.

Talk to your parents. If that doesn't work, you can ask for help from a family member or friend they will listen to.

Speak about your problem with someone you trust. For example, a friend, another family member, a colleague, a teacher or your GP. They can offer their advice and think of a solution.

Try to find out why your family objects. It can help you explain to them why they don't have to worry.

Is there anyone you know who is in a similar relationship? Are they happy? Perhaps this person can meet with your parents.

Talk to your parents about who you choose as your partner as early on as possible. It gives them time to get used to the idea that you choose your partner yourself.

Be sure about what you want and let your family know and feel this.

Are you forced into a marriage? The information on Forced Marriage on page 6 will tell you more about what you can do.

FREE CHOICE OF EDUCATION

What is it?

Free choice of education means that you have the right to choose the school and education you want. There are hundreds of studies at different levels to choose from. It is important to choose an education or programme that you feel comfortable with and which you enjoy as this increases your chance of getting your diploma.

There are several study selection tests that you can do online. They can make it easier for you to find out what you want to study. One example can be found on www.studiekeuze123.nl.

What are your rights?

You are entitled to get an education. The choice of study is yours.

Everybody living in the Netherlands has the right to study. This also applies to refugees and marriage migrants in the Netherlands.

Dutch law stipulates that children have to go to school until the age of 16. From the age of 16 up to 18, they have to continue their schooling if they don't yet have a secondary education diploma. This is the so-called "qualification obligation".

"My father is a carpenter. He wants me to become a carpenter too and take over his business one day. My father got angry when I told him that I want to be a hairdresser. But I'm making my own decision and will train to become a hairdresser."

What can I do?

Do your parents (or does your partner) object to your choice of education? Go to the Available Support page 18 to see where you can get help or advice.

Freedom of education is a human right. Explain this to your family.

Your parents know you well. Listen to them, but realise that you are the one making the final decision.

Talk to your family. If that doesn't work, you can ask for help from a family member or friend they will listen to.

Perhaps your family is not aware of the studies and job opportunities that are available. Offer them more information. Bring them along when you visit open days at the schools or institutions you are interested in. Ask your teacher to talk to your parents.

Try to find out why they don't agree with your choice. It can help you explain to them why they don't have to worry.

Is there anyone you know who has done the same programme? Does this person have a good job now? Maybe they can meet with your family.

Talk to your parents about the schooling you choose for yourself as early on as possible. It gives them time to get used to the idea that you make your own choice.

Are you certain about your choice? Then make sure you get all the information there is. Know what kinds of jobs you can get and what you could earn to make it easier to convince your family.

If you are unable to pay for your studies yourself you can apply for a student loan. You can also apply for an additional loan if your parents have a low income. Go to www.duo.nl for more information about how you can pay for your studies.

"My daughter wanted to study Journalism. I didn't agree with her choice. I forced her to study Law so she could make more money. She's working as a lawyer now but I know that she is not happy. I feel bad about having forced her into this."

Your child's choice of education

It is important that your child can get the education they want. You can help them make the right choice, but you can never force them. Children are informed at school about the different types of studies and education they can pursue. Does your child want to study something that you don't know much about? Or something you don't have a clear idea of or might initially object to? Find more information. Also with the less popular studies, there are still jobs around and opportunities to make a good living.

RIGHT TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

What is it?

Living independently means that you no longer live with your parents. You have your own place. In the Netherlands, many young people who are still studying are not living with their parents but are in student housing or in shared accommodations. Many people who are in a relationship but are not married also live together.

What are your rights?

You have the right to live independently from the age of 18. If you are still a minor, you need permission from your parents.

“My school was far away from where I lived with my parents. I had to get up at 5 in the morning to be there on time. My father noticed how tired I was. He allowed me to find a place of my own. I am now renting a room in the city where I study and I get better grades.”

What can I do?

Do you want to live independently but your parents aren't allowing you to do so? Go to the Available Support page 18 to see where you can get help or advice.

Talk to your parents. If your parents refuse to listen to your reasoning, you can ask for help from a family member or friend they will listen to.

Are you studying or working a long way from home? Tell your parents how tough that is. Every morning, you have to get up very early and you get home late at night. You cannot finish your homework.

Explain why it would also be good for you to live on your own. You will learn to take care of yourself. You will get better grades as you'll have more time to study.

Do you know someone who lives away from home and who is doing well? Perhaps this person can meet with your parents.

Try to find out why your parents object. It can help you explain to them why they don't have to worry.

Talk to your parents about wanting to live independently as early on as possible. It gives them time to get used to the idea that you make your own choice.

Do you feel that your parents don't trust you, or do they tell you this? Ask them what you can do to make them trust you.

Make sure you get all the information there is. For example, whether you can afford it.

Perhaps you are eligible to receive housing benefits, etcetera. It might make it easier to convince your parents and answer their questions.

If you plan on continuing your education after secondary school, it is important to register for student housing well in time. You can also use websites like www.kamers.nl or www.kamernet.nl. Besides that, there are many Facebook pages where people search for new flatmates.

In many municipalities, you can register for rental housing from the age of 18. Make sure you do this well in time. Even if you are still unsure of moving away from your parents, considering registering early as the waiting lists are very long.

Go to www.femmesforfreedom.com and www.wijzingeldzaken.nl for more information about what you need to do and organise to live independently.

Go to www.toeslagenaanvraag.nl for information about benefits and allowances.

EMERGENCY PLAN

Is your situation at home unsafe? Are you forced to marry someone? Are you afraid of being left behind abroad? Talk with someone you trust and ask for help. This can be a friend, a teacher (yours or your child's), your GP or another aid worker. A confidant or confidential councillor can listen to your story, help you and/or refer you to a specific organisation.

Tips on talking with your confidant and/or aid worker:

Do you want to talk with your GP? Then make an appointment and go alone. If you are unable to arrange that, you can write a note that you want to speak with your doctor alone and leave this secretly at their practice.

Don't be ashamed to tell your story. Explain everything, don't leave out any details.

Make arrangements for calling, texting or emailing and when you will get in touch. You can also agree that your confidant can call the police if you don't respond for 24 hours.

You can agree on a code word that you use when your situation is precarious but you cannot talk.

Delete calls and messages from your phone and/or your browser history.

Stick to the arrangements you make together.

Write down the phone numbers of people or organisations that can help you. This ensures that you still have the numbers somewhere if your phone is taken away.

Arrange for an interpreter. You are entitled to an interpreter when you don't or hardly speak any Dutch. An interpreter is there to translate what is being said. Support organisations can organise this for you.

You can trust your aid worker because support organisations are bound to a confidentiality obligation. That means that they cannot tell anything to your family or partner.

It is always good to have people around you with whom you can talk. But how to get to know new people?

Chat with your neighbours. Visit a community centre or something similar near you.

Try to find a volunteer job. Go to local organisations and search online.

If you have children who go to school, it is good to talk with the other parents. You can volunteer to help with school activities.

Perhaps you can join a sports or hobby club. If you cannot afford a membership, your municipality may be able to help you financially.

THE RIGHT TO BELIEVE IN WHAT YOU WANT, OR NOT TO BELIEVE

In the Netherlands, everyone has the right to believe in what they want, or not to believe. Do you consider yourself as not religious, an atheist, or a humanist and do you wish to speak about your experiences in a safe environment? The Dutch organisation *Humanistisch Verbond* organises moments to talk about this (in English and Dutch). Go to www.humanistischverbond.nl or email freedomofthought@humanistischverbond.nl.

Available support

What kind of help do you need?	Contact
Do you need help relating to female circumcision, honour-based violence, forced abandonment, forced marriage and/or marital captivity? Then contact the police and/or <i>Veilig Thuis</i> .	Are you in immediate danger? Call the police: 112. Are you not in immediate danger but you do need help? Call Veilig Thuis: 0800-2000 or from abroad: +31 703 11 90 07. You can also chat with Veilig Thuis via their website www.veiligthuis.nl .
You can talk with your doctor about all these topics and any other issues. You can also contact the GGD (Municipal Health Service).	Go to www.ggd.nl to find the contact details of the GGD near you.
Do you need help abroad? The Ministry of Foreign Affairs helps Dutch victims of forced marriage and abandonment who want to return to the Netherlands.	Contact the Dutch embassy in the country you are in or contact the 24/7 Contact Centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at +31 247 247 247, WhatsApp via +316 8238 7796, Twitter @247BZ and the Foreign Affairs and Customs Reisapp [travel app].
Have you been abandoned abroad? Are you forced to get married abroad? Or are you afraid that this will happen to someone else? Contact the <i>Landelijk Knooppunt Huwelijksdwang en Achterlating</i> [LKHA - Dutch Centre of Forced Marriage and Abandonment].	www.huwelijksdwangenachterlating.nl Phone: +31 (0)70 34 54 319
You can apply for a residence permit at the IND. This application means that you want a permit that allows you to live in the Netherlands. The IND can tell you more about everything relating to the residence permit.	www.ind.nl Phone: 088 043 04 30 When abroad, you need to call +31 88 043 04 30. Contact by letter or email: Algemene vragen Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, Postbus 17, 9560 AA Ter Apel
The support organisation <i>Het Juridisch Loket</i> can help you find a lawyer near you.	www.juridischloket.nl Phone: 0900-8020.
The organisation <i>Sterk Huis</i> offers help when you are dealing with (domestic) violence and when you need shelter.	www.sterkhuis.nl They also offer a chat option via their website. You can call <i>Sterk Huis</i> at 013 543 30 73. Do you need help or a place to sleep straight away? Call 013 751 11 11
Eva and Zahir offer shelter, protection and counselling to girls and young women aged 14 - 23 after (the threat of) honour-based violence and forced marriage.	More information about Eva: www.kompaanendebocht.nl More information about Zahir: www.fier.nl/voor-professionals/zahir
Has something happened against your will? Are you being forced or pressured? You can share your story (anonymously) via Chat met Fier. Their staff listens, offers information, and helps you with practical things if that is what you want.	Chat via www.fier.nl/chat . You can also call Fier! at 088 – 20 80 000

Are you under the age of 25? Then you can contact the organisation Sense if you have questions about contraception, sex, venereal diseases, abortion, and female circumcision.	Go to www.sense.info . You can send an email, chat, or visit during a Sense consultation hour. You can call them (anonymously) at 0900-402 402 0. Calls are free of charge.
Do you experience problems raising your child? Or are there any other family problems?	For all your questions, you can contact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One of the aid workers operating in your area. You can find them via Google by searching for “wijkteam + the name of your neighbourhood + the name of the town/village) ○ The <i>Centrum voor Jeugd en Gezin</i>. Go to www.centrumvoorjeugdengazin.nl. ○ The <i>Opvoedpoli</i>: www.opvoedpoli.nl.
Are you still a minor? You can call the <i>Kindertelefoon</i> to talk about anything.	Chat via www.kindertelefoon.nl or call at 0800-0432.
Femmes for Freedom is committed to stopping forced marriages, child marriages, forced abandonment, hidden women, and marital captivity for girls and women in the Netherlands. The organisation offers help and advice.	www.femmesforfreedom.com . Do you have questions or need help? Call 070-362 65 06 or send an email to info@femmesforfreedom.com .
The organisation UAF supports refugees who want to study or work.	www.uaf.nl .