

Probation officer Frans in the Netherlands: supervision meetings while walking

It is no secret that walking is healthy for one's body and mind. It generates positive energy, makes you relax and your condition improves. Someone who knows all about this is probation officer Frans from the Netherlands. He has been active as a walking coach for years and now he also does his supervision interviews while walking. Maximum 55 minutes as "It has to be fun for them of course."

Clients having a hard time

When the corona time came, Frans noticed that his clients had a hard time. "Many of them are sex offenders or people with mental health problems", he explains. "What should they do now that their daytime activities and treatment had been put on hold? And how could I keep an eye on them when inviting them to the office was no longer an option?" His experience as a walking coach offered a solution, as he knew that opening up while walking is in many cases significantly easier than in a 9 square meter office room. For this reason he decided to try this way of working with his clients.

One of the clients with whom he walks on the beach is an intelligent man from Syria who has been living in the Netherlands for 4 years now. Frans: "I had the feeling that during the time he was on the run towards the Netherlands much more had happened than he told us. There was nothing about it in his file however and if he ever mentioned something, it was in a very short way, as from a distance. But during the beach walk, he told me within ten minutes that walking was not his hobby as he had been walking almost non-stop for days and days during his flight to the Netherlands. And yes, then I could ask the right questions and he told me his whole story. "

The man told much more, also about his situation while living in the Netherlands. Frans: "He refused to look for a job, much to our dismay. But during the walk he told me that his mother was in need of help – she was not able to leave her house and therefore he had a full-time job taking care of her. We did not know this before – he had never mentioned anything. But it did contribute a lot to what I could focus on in my supervisory interviews – I immediately understood him much better."

Preparation

Frans prepares his walks in the same way as he would normally do his office surveillance interviews. "But I notice that often things turn out differently than I thought, especially because people open up more easily than during regular interviews. It really does matter that they don't have to look at me, that the movement clears their head and that they are outdoors. It is very nice to see. "

Nevertheless, Frans sticks to a maximum of 55 minutes. "Just under the hour – that is a mental limit. And these people are not used to walking at all, some of them have bad shoes, get sore feet, or start sweating. I don't want those kind of things – it should not feel like a 'punishment' to them. The best compliment is when at the end of a walk they ask me when the next time will be. "

Safety

Just like for regular supervisory interviews, Frans also keeps his own safety in mind. "I always make sure that my telephone is fully charged, I report to my office security that I will be out and I also

inform a colleague before and after my walks. Besides that I select suitable places where more people are around, like the beach. And of course I also choose my clients. If normally I do not meet a client alone, then also now I will not do so. Safety is a top priority. ”

Colleagues

Meanwhile, colleagues from Frans have also started doing their supervision interviews during outside walks. “I have made a checklist for them to use when going out with a client. For example to bring a bottle of water for yourself and for your client, to take into account that you cannot go to the toilet since all restaurants and bars are closed – those kind of things. And of course instructions on how to guarantee their own safety. ”

When the regular work in the offices will start again, it shall undoubtedly become quite complicated to keep sufficient distance in the meeting rooms. Frans: “If you go for a walk outside with, for example, 20% of your clients, this creates space, you work on your fitness and you get a shot of vitamin D. And so does your client. Positive for everyone, right?”