



# **Gaming for Mutual Learning in Elder Care GAMLEC**

## **IO2.3. Format of the Learning Content for The Cards**



## Document Information

This document explains how to create learning content for the learning cards of the learning board game.

## Organisation Name of Lead Partner

IP-International GmbH

## Author(s)

Sylvie Schoch

## Contributing Partner(s)

AFEdemy

ASP Città di Bologna

CADIAI

VMU

ISIS GmbH

## VERSION

V02

## STATUS

Final

## Delivery Date

January 4<sup>th</sup> 2021

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



GAMLEC – Gaming for Mutual Learning in Elder Care and all publications by GAMLEC Consortium are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

The results of the Erasmus+ project GAMLEC consist of this guide to the design of the format of the card content, the rules of the learning board game for the game version with Game Coach, the rules of the learning board game without Game Coach, the learning game cards for adults about the quality of life of nursing home residents, a Compendium, the learning goals, and objectives of the learning board game, the rules of the learning board game, an instruction manual for the game version with Coach, an Educational Framework, Guidelines for the learning board game, and an interactive E-learning platform. The results are available in English, German, Italian, Dutch and Lithuanian at [www.gamlec.eu](http://www.gamlec.eu).



## Table of Content

Content	Page	
IO2.3. Format of The Learning Content		
0.	Introduction	4
0.1.	Representation of the Overall Learning Goals and the Educational Objectives of the Board Game Through the Format	5
0.2.	The Different Card Categories	6
0.3.	Some General Considerations About the Game and The Format	6
1.	Format of the Card Groups for The Game Version Without a Game Coach	8
1.1.	Cards with Content That is Beneficial to The Quality of Life of Dependent Care Home Residents (Awards)	8
1.1.1.	Format of the Learning Content with Examples of What is Beneficial to QoL	8
1.1.1.1.	How it Works	8
1.1.1.2.	The Structure	8
1.1.1.3.	The Wording	9
1.1.2.	The Good Fairy Cards	10
1.1.2.1.	How it Works	10
1.1.2.2.	The Structure	11
1.1.2.3.	The Wording	12
1.2.	Food for Thought: Cards with Content That is Detrimental to the Quality of Life of Dependent Care Home Residents (Penalties)	13
1.2.1.	Format of the Learning Content with Examples of What is Detrimental to QoL	13
1.2.1.1.	How it Works	13
1.2.1.2.	The Structure	14
1.2.1.3.	The Wording	15
1.2.2.	The Evil Fairy Cards	16
1.2.2.1.	How it Works	16
1.2.2.2.	The Structure	16
1.2.2.3.	The Wording	17
1.3.	Cards for Professional Staff (Awards)	18
1.3.1.	How it Works	18
1.3.2.	The Structure	18
1.3.3.	The Wording	19
1.4.	Format of Cards for The Game Version to Be Used Exclusively with a Game Coach	20
1.4.1.	How it Works	20
1.4.2.	The Structure	20
1.4.3.	The Wording of the Playing Cards for the Players	21
1.4.4.	Additional Information and Instructions for the Game Coach	22
1.4.4.1.	The Educational Objectives	22
1.4.4.2.	Recommended Time Schedule	23
1.4.4.3.	Venues and Equipment	23
1.4.4.4.	Minimum/Maximum Number of Players and Teams	24
1.4.4.5.	Aspects Requiring Special Attention	24
1.4.4.6.	Instructions on How to Guide the Players While Working on The Task	24



## IO2.3. Format of the Learning Content

### 0. Introduction

With the word ‘format’ we intend the way the learning content from the Compendium is conveyed on the playing cards: how it is structured and worded, as well as the quantity of text on each card<sup>1</sup>.

Depending on the educational objectives, the same content from the European Compendium on Criteria for the Quality of Life of Care Home Residents (hereinafter “the Compendium”) can be presented or worded in many different ways.

Since many of the criteria for quality of life are soft factors with different degrees of importance for each individual (cf. Compendium: 5), it is important to foster individual awareness and focus on self-reflection, besides imparting knowledge on what is beneficial to QoL and detrimental to it.

The players of the GAMLEC board game are professional carers, volunteers, committed family members of the dependent older people. As all of them interact continuously with dependent older people, it is very important to focus on empathy as well.

Older people too might be interested in playing the game and this could be a source of interesting insights for continuous improvement of the game in the future.

A considerable number of the criteria listed in the Compendium can be considered soft factors that are strictly interrelated with the behaviour of those who take care of dependent older people in care homes.

Many of the criteria are aspects inherent to the care that is provided, verbal and nonverbal communication, behaviour and the attitude shown towards older dependent people.

The sheer knowledge of these criteria might not be sufficient to make a change in peoples’ behaviour, and considerably improve the quality of life of older people. Awareness and self-reflection along with empathy are therefore important educational objectives of the board game that should not be neglected.

Accordingly, it is necessary to formulate and structure the learning content in a way that fosters empathy, and motivates players to behave in a way that improves the QoL of dependent care home residents.

However, some of the criteria listed in the Compendium refer to the built environment such as barrier-free outdoor areas that can be used by residents with mobility restrictions (cf. Compendium 2.1.2), to name just one. In this case it is not so much a question of behaviour but knowing the factors that contribute to the QoL of older people. It is therefore important to check what is available and what could be improved with resources at hand.

Besides conveying the knowledge of the criteria *tout court*, it is equally important to inspire and motivate the players to continuously learn, think critically or differently as well as come up with creative ideas.

A game should also be fun. It should include stunning effects, evoke astonishment and be appealing. It should not overly frustrate the players in order to make sure they keep playing and learning.

---

<sup>1</sup> As to the maximum length of the text, please consult a graphic designer before making a decision.



Even though we are talking about a learning game, it should never be perceived by the players as another duty to be added to the numerous duties they already have to fulfil.

It should be an enjoyable activity people take up out of free will. It should be inspiring and make players want to carry on playing; even more so when time is a very scarce resource as it is in nursing homes.

### **0.1. Representation of the Overall Learning Goals and the Educational Objectives of the Board Game Through the Format**

The content taken from the Compendium has to be worded in a way that reflects the overall learning goals and the educational objectives as described in the Educational Framework. However, the educational objectives are not all together reflected in the content of every single card. The game as such pursues the listed objectives as a whole whereas the content of every single learning card may pursue more than one objective at the same time.

Moreover, it is necessary to distinguish between the two different ways the game can be played:

1. The GAMLEC board game version to be played without a Game Coach; and
2. The GAMLEC board game version to be played with a Game Coach.

The cards used for the version without a Game Coach can be used for the version with a Coach, but not vice versa.

Generally speaking, the version without a Game Coach is supposed to be very simple. The players are supposed to be able to play and enjoy the learning board game after having familiarised themselves with its rules and instructions.

The version with a Game Coach contains tasks or exercises that are more complex and need to be moderated by a Game Coach. It also contains experiential learning, specific team exercises, or problem-solving activities that are not included in the version without a Game Coach.

Please bear in mind the fact that the game without a Game Coach has to be as easy-to-play as possible in order to keep the learning threshold of the learning board game low.

A Coach has to be specifically prepared for this role in the version with a Game Coach. The guidelines contain a section on the Coaches' role as well as references to the specific instructions (available in a separate document) on how to guide the players through the game.

Although it would be advantageous if the Game Coach has some training experience, a committed player willing to learn should be able to act as Game Coach. All necessary information and learning content needed for this role are [provided](#).

### **0.2. The Different Card Categories**



There are two major groups of cards: the cards with learning content on what is beneficial to the QoL of the care home residents, and the cards with learning content on what is detrimental to their QoL

These groups are suitable for all players, professional staff, volunteers, family members, and the residents themselves.

A third group of cards has been added for professional staff only. The learning content of these cards is put in such a way that the players need specific knowledge or experience on the job that only professionals have. Accordingly, these cards are used exclusively when professionals are the only players.

To make it easy to distinguish between the cards meant for all players and those for professionals only, the graphic layout of the cards for professionals is different.

For the specific version of the learning board game to be played exclusively with a Game Coach, a fourth category of cards has been created. The content of this category consists of tasks to be completed by teams playing against each other. All tasks in these cards need to be performed with the assistance of a Game Coach who offers instructions, help and guidance to the players. This card category too has a different graphic layout in order to make it easy for the players to distinguish them from the other card categories.

Each deck of cards follows a format, or pattern as described below.

### **0.3. Some General Considerations about the Game and the Format**

The general idea of the entire board game is to increase the quality of life of the residents with every space the players are allowed to move forward.

Accordingly, instead of “start” and “home”, a different wording has been chosen: the players move from “start” to “excellence”. The term “excellence” is used to highlight the underlying idea of improving the residents’ QoL while learning by playing a serious game.

Generally speaking, the cards with content that is beneficial to the QoL of the residents describe situations, actions, behaviours, etc. that are contributing to the wellbeing of the residents.

The cards with content that is detrimental to the QoL of the residents depict undesired situations or behaviours that worsen the wellbeing of the residents.

As a consequence, everything that improves their QoL is awarded whereas everything that worsens it is followed by a penalty.

On an operational level, the player who picks up one of the cards of the two macro-categories is allowed to move forward when the content of the card is about improving QoL. When the content is about something that is detrimental to the QoL of the residents, the players are told to move backward or to stay put and reflect. The learning objective, besides imparting knowledge, is to increase critical thinking, improve awareness or foster empathy. A few cards of the “Detrimental to QoL” category contain an additional instruction: players are not only told to move backwards but are also given an opportunity to “try harder” by picking up another card.

The small deck of cards that has been created as an “extra” and is specifically and exclusively for the professional staff contains very simple questions.



The professional staff is asked to list things they are supposed to know, and be awarded for what they actually know. If they cannot answer the questions, they are asked to stay put.

The questions or tasks are worded in such a way as to ensure that no help or moderation from a Game Coach is needed. This card category is an addition to the other two macro-categories mentioned above, and is meant to be added to the game only when all players are professional carers. They are not added when other non-professional carers, like volunteers, family members or the residents themselves, are playing.

The last category of cards is the essential part of the version of the learning board game that needs a Game Coach to be played with. The game played with a Game Coach is exclusively played by teams and not by individual players: two teams are competing against each other.

The cards specifically created for this version always contain tasks to be completed by the teams. The focus is on knowledge, opinions, critical thinking, awareness, empathy and creativity. The focus is always and without exception on team work.

It is absolutely necessary to play with a Game Coach, and it is up to the Game Coach to choose the cards out of this category to play with. The Game Coach selects the cards according to the specific focus s/he wants to address, and the time available for playing the learning game. Accordingly, the Game Coach can decide to add all the cards of the game without a Game Coach, or only some of them. The more cards are played with, the more time is required to play the game.

The tasks contained on the cards category to be played with a Game Coach are exercises that require a certain amount of time to be completed by the playing teams. This has to be taken into account when preparing the playing session as are all the materials that have to be provided by the Game Coach to complete the task (paper, pencils, flip chart, etc.). Specific [instructions](#) are provided to the Game Coach.

In conclusion, it is important to underline that one single card can focus on more than one educational objective. There is no rule, though, that states that more than one objective has to be conveyed by the content of a single card, or that there is a sequence or timeframe for the objectives that has to be followed.

The different decks of card contain content from all categories of the Compendium, but not every category or subcategory of the Compendium has to be translated into content for all existing decks of cards.

In addition to the content taken from the Compendium, learning content can be created for the cards that focusses on general awareness, self-reflection, creative thinking, or continuous improvement as such.

However, as a general rule for all categories and cards, it is essential that **there is no finger pointing or blaming at any given time**. No matter how detrimental to the QoL of the care home residents the content of a card may be, it is of the utmost importance that no player ever feels accused or blamed for anything. This would be detrimental to the willingness to play and learning itself.



# 1. Format of The Decks of Cards for the Game Version without a Game Coach

## 1.1. Cards with Content that is Beneficial to the Quality of Life of Dependent Care Home Residents (Awards)

### 1.1.1. Format of the Learning Content with Examples of What Is Beneficial to QoL

The content for these cards can be taken from all categories of the Compendium.

The content reflects:

- Desired behaviour
- Best practices
- Examples of how existing issues have been solved (creatively)
- Creative ideas that can improve the QoL of care home residents

Whatever could be potentially considered “fancy”, “lush”, “not strictly necessary” is contained in the “the Good Fairy” sub-category.

#### 1.1.1.1. How it Works

The player who takes up one of these cards is rewarded for something s/he has done, or for a practice that has been adopted in the nursing home that promotes the residents’ quality of life. This is meant to facilitate identification with a desired behaviour, a best practice, a creative idea or a solution to an issue that promotes the QoL of the dependent care home residents.

The content is always about something to be proud of. The players acquire knowledge on what could be done, what could be transferred to the nursing home where they work, or where their family members live. The content might also inspire the players to analyse existing issues critically, and think of similar solutions, or develop new ideas of their own.

All cards with content that promotes the QoL offer something positive to be happy about, or contain some sort of gratification: something the players like to identify with, or are likely to desire, and to emulate.

The content may be drawn upon real stories of older people living in a nursing home offering “real life examples” for the criteria listed in the Compendium as “desired behaviour”, “creative solution/idea” or “best practise”, etc.

In any case, it is important to evoke positive emotions.

#### 1.1.1.2. The Structure

As a general rule, there are three steps to follow when creating the content for the cards.





The first step is about how to begin. The text always starts with some appreciation or an appreciative exclamation, such as: “congrats, good job, great idea, well done, how thoughtful, awesome, fabulous, thumbs up, noteworthy, what an accomplishment, etc.”.

The second step is about the specific content. A short description of what is being done and rewarded (behaviour, best practice, existing rules, offer in the nursing home, etc.).

Some examples are: “You managed to create a group of family members who read books to the residents who cannot read on their own. The residents can choose the books they like.”, or “Your nursing home just received an award for the best Christmas lunch ever. Wonderful food and an outstanding Christmas table setting. Residents and their family members had a wonderful time together.”

The third step is about positive reinforcement. After describing the factors that enhance quality of life, another exclamation or appreciation should be added wherever possible<sup>2</sup> in order to reinforce what has been said: a compliment, an appreciation, a positive feeling or appreciation by the residents. Examples are: great idea, good job, so/very proud of you. A positive feeling and/or a joyful emotion can be expressed too: what a feast, so sweet, so nice, so proud of you, the residents loved it, brilliant, fantastic, you made a difference, etc.<sup>3</sup>

These three steps are then followed by the award. The award is linked with the rules of the game. In other words, the players are being told what the award is about, and what they are supposed to do.

This text always begins in the same way in order to make it easy to grasp that what follows is the award, and what they are supposed to do: moving forward on the board.

The award always begins with the same positive reinforcement “Great!”, followed by the instructions of what to do such as: “Move X spaces forward”.

The general idea is to vary the game. In order to keep attention and suspense high, try and avoid attributing the same value all the time. The number of spaces to move forward or, in case of penalties, to move backward and/or to stay put, has to be tested in trial sessions of the game in order to ensure that the players can easily reach “excellence”, i.e., the end of the game, within a reasonable time frame (30 – 45 minutes maximum).

### 1.1.1.3. The Wording

- ✓ Full text (appreciation, content, positive reinforcement followed by the award).
- ✓ A story that describes the desired situation and is meant to inspire the players to emulate or think of something similar to implement. In order to foster identification with the story or the content, the wording uses the second person singular or plural, such as “you had a great idea”, “you and your colleagues ...”, or can refer to the nursing home “Your nursing home has just received an award ....”.

---

<sup>2</sup> It is important to reduce the length of the text on the cards to 45 - 50 words max. This is necessary because the dimensions of the playing cards do not allow for unlimited text. The content should also be easy to read, be it in terms of dimension of the printed font, or terms of the time needed to read the content aloud while playing. An exception to this rule is the cards for the game with a Game Coach which contain team exercises. The text of these cards may exceed 45 – 50 words.



- ✓ The linguistic register goes from standard to colloquial. Formal or very formal language and difficult terms have to be avoided. The content has to be worded in a positive and easy-to-grasp way. It should evoke positive emotions.
- ✓ The length of the entire text should not exceed 45 – 50 words (excluding award).
- ✓ The award is always introduced by the same exclamation (“Great!”) followed by the instruction (“Move X spaces forward”).

Some examples from the learning board game:

Card # 10 - Based on Compendium A 1.3.4:

Awesome! You know Ms Mitchell loves to dress up. Putting on lipstick, her favorite necklace, a tiny drop of her perfume, made her day. You could literally feel how much she enjoyed the compliments she got when she met up with her friends!

Great! Move 4 spaces forward.

Card # 13 - Based on Compendium P 2.2.1:

You made Ms Mellow’s day! Asking her to talk about her life, and the memories she wanted to talk about, put such a heart-warming smile on her face.

Great! Move 4 spaces forward.

### **1.1.2. The Good Fairy Cards**

The content for these cards can be taken from all categories of the Compendium.

As already mentioned, the content reflects the softer criteria listed in the Compendium, that, given the scarcity of resources in nursing homes, might be considered as “lush”, unnecessary “luxury” or “wishful thinking”.

#### **1.1.2.1. How it Works**

Those players who work in an environment where resources are generally scarce might build up resistance against the softer criteria like, for example, a beautifully laid table, or paying attention to matching colours when helping the residents getting dressed. They could argue that there are more important things such as: “If we do not even have the time to take the residents to the toilet during meal times, it is absurd to talk about putting lipstick or perfume or choose matching colours”.

All the criteria that could possibly be considered as “lush” or “wishful thinking” or “nice to have” but might be considered “not really necessary” are therefore provided by a Good Fairy. The Good Fairy takes the players into a wonderful world where all these things are available and/or possible. She evokes positive feelings. The Good Fairy invites the players in a very kind and soft way to allow themselves to think of those “lush” things too, possibly without evoking feelings of guilt or frustration. She takes them to a wonderful world with happy people, the care home residents and the carers, while trying not to evoke negative feelings or frustrate the players.



The idea is to put the players in a mood of “just imagine for a moment ....” without putting pressure or creating a sense of guilt in those who would like to do more, or do better, or do things in a different way, but who are not able to do so most of the time.

The content should be put in a way that inspires the players to keep a positive attitude, and an open mind, instead of turning immediately down what is being suggested. The players should be inspired to think that, against all odds, there is a way to do at least some of these things instead of considering any idea or suggestion of the softer kind as “not realistic” because of lack of time or resources.

The “Good Fairy” is meant to challenge mental habits and beliefs, and question what is given for granted in a soft, kind and joyful way. The objective is to question and learn continuously rather than being trapped by the perceived impossibility to do anything about the situation as the players might know it.

Besides, people are pleased when they are doing some good and make other people happy. The Good Fairy’s objective is to evoke these feeling and offer examples of what makes (older) people happy while improving their quality of life.

Happiness is contagious: if older people are happy and show they are, the perceived job satisfaction of the care home staff increases as well.

The positive examples contained in the “Good Fairy” cards are meant to inspire and motivate all players to continuously improve whenever possible, and this includes the softer criteria, by taking even just a tiny step at a time.

In any case, it is important to evoke positive emotions, avoiding any frustration caused by, for example, the perceived “impossibility” to emulate what the Good Fairy exemplifies.

### **1.1.2.2. The Structure**

Just as described above, the content of the Good Fairy card follows three steps as well.

The first step is about how to begin. The text always begins with an exclamation that expresses astonishment, a nice surprise, appreciation, happiness, etc.

Examples are: look at that, exciting, great surprise, excellent, awesome, fantastic, etc.

The second step is about the specific content. It offers a short description of what the Good Fairy does or has done to improve the residents’ quality of life.

Some examples are: “The Good Fairy organized a flea market at the nursing home, and you found what you have been looking for: an old pocket watch.” or “The Good Fairy planted beautiful, colourful flowers in the garden which is always easily accessible at all times.”

The third step is about positive reinforcement. After describing what the Good Fairy does, another exclamation of appreciation or happiness follows: “Lucky Mr Johnson, so exciting, so sweet, so caring, what a relief, etc.

The three steps, as described above, are then followed by the award. The award is interlinked with the rules of the game. In other words, the players are being told what the award is about, and how they are supposed to move their pawns on the learning board.



This text always begins in the same way in order to make it easy to identify that what follows is the award. It always begins with the same positive reinforcement i.e., “Great!” followed by instructions on what to do, such as: “Move X spaces forward”.

The general idea is to vary the game. In order to keep attention and suspense high, try and avoid attributing the same value all the time. The number of spaces to move forward or, in case of penalties, to move backward and/or stay put, has to be tested in trial sessions of the game in order to make sure that the players can easily reach “excellence”, i.e., the end of the game, within a reasonable time (30 – 45 minutes maximum).

### 1.1.2.3. The Wording

- ✓ Full text (excitement/nice surprise/appreciation, content, positive reinforcement, followed by the award).
- ✓ A Good Fairy story depicts quality criteria that could be taken in some contexts or nursing homes for wishful thinking and, as a consequence, might lead to frustration. In order to avoid frustration, a sense of guilt, or reactions, such as “We have more important things to do, and do not even get round to do essential duties, we do not have time for what is not essential!”, the protagonist is always a Good Fairy.
- ✓ The Good Fairy brings up what makes residents feel good and is meant to inspire the players to take into consideration those quality criteria that might seem “not too important” as well. The text always starts with a joyful exclamation like “Look at that, excellent, etc.” and tells a story where the Good Fairy is the protagonist. The content should evoke positive emotions and allow for identification with the Good Fairy, just as the saying whereby: “Doing good makes you feel good”.
- ✓ The linguistic register goes from standard to colloquial, and technical terms should be avoided.

Some examples from the learning board game:

Card # 55 - Based on Compendium D 3.3.1.

Wonderful! Every hour without fail, the Good Fairy sprinkles her magic dust in the nursing home, to make sure that every nurse who enters the room knocks on the door. The residents are so grateful!

Great! Move 3 spaces forward.

Or

Card # 50 - Based on Compendium P 2.2.4.

Exciting! The Good Fairy organized a literary competition in your care home. Everybody is free to participate: the residents and the general public. A jury will assign the awards, and the mayor in person will hand them over in an official ceremony!



Great! Move 4 spaces forward.

## 1.2. Food for Thought: Cards with Content that is Detrimental to the Quality of Life of Dependent Care Home Residents (Penalties)

### 1.2.1. Format of the Learning Content with Examples of What Is Detrimental to QoL

The content for these cards can be taken from all categories of the Compendium.

It reflects

- Undesired or inappropriate behaviour.
- Formal rules as well as the rules of “the hidden agenda”<sup>4</sup> applied in a nursing home that are detrimental to the quality of life of dependent older people, and do not respect and/or fulfil the criteria listed in the Compendium.
- Examples and stories that depict the opposite of what is listed in the Compendium.

Whatever could be considered mean, rude, disrespectful, or even violent is contained in the “Evil Fairy” sub-category.

#### 1.2.1.1. How it Works

When creating card content for this category, it is extremely important to pay attention to the wording. It has to be kind and polite; finger pointing has to be avoided at any given time.

The players who pick up a card with content that is detrimental to QoL should never feel accused or blamed. This could be detrimental to the playful and joyful approach of game-based learning.

Finger pointing or blaming could evoke negative feelings like anger, frustration, or guilt. The learning board game should be appealing at any time even though it ends with content that depicts what is detrimental to the quality of life of dependent care home residents. Players should never lose their interest in playing and learning, even from the negative examples.

The content is therefore always presented in a rather indirect way. It is always about something that is detrimental to the QoL of the care home residents, and aims at increasing the players’ awareness as well as their ability to reflect and strive for improvement, learning from the negative examples in the cards.

**The content must be worded in a way that the players do not feel accused or blamed.**

---

<sup>4</sup> “Hidden agenda” is used for what is really going on, the real behaviour in contrast to what the official rules of the nursing home state.



### 1.2.1.2. The Structure

As a general rule the content for these cards is provided in two steps and is followed by the penalty, in other words the instructions related to what the players are expected to do: moving backwards or staying put.

Since the content of these cards is detrimental to the quality of life of the residents, the feelings evoked might be rather negative. In order to avoid to overly magnify these feelings, there is no exclamation to reinforce them at the beginning.

It goes without saying that negative emotions too are part of the game. However, negative emotions should never be overwhelming or lead to a strong sense of guilt, anger or frustration. This could be detrimental to playing the game as such, and could hinder learning.

At the same time, it is important to create awareness of particularly inappropriate or even violent behaviour and statements towards dependent care home residents. In order to address such delicate issues without finger pointing, an Evil Fairy character embodies inappropriate behaviour. Accordingly, the format of the “Evil Fairy” sub-category follows slightly different rules, as described later on in this document.

For all other cards with content that is detrimental to the quality of life, the rule is that no negative reinforcement is put at the beginning of the text.

Accordingly, the first step is a description of what is happening, without being introduced by any exclamation.

The content starts directly with a story, the description of a situation, existing rules, or behaviour that are detrimental to the QoL of the residents.

Some examples are: “Mr Samtani comes from India. He is vegetarian, but often there is no vegetarian meal on the menu”. (Cf. Compendium A 1.5.2)

The second step is a reinforcement. After the description of what is detrimental to the quality of life, an exclamation that serves as a reinforcement follows. If the description has a negative effect on the residents, there could be an exclamation to evoke sympathetic feelings in the players, or an exclamation that fosters the players’ empathy. Examples are: improvement needed, heartbreaking, how unthoughtful, how embarrassing, how appalling, so sad, etc.

The above two steps are then followed by the penalty which is interlinked with the rules of the game. In other words, the players are being told what the penalty is about and what they are supposed to do.

In order to make it easy to identify that what follows is the penalty, the text always starts in the same way, and explains then what to do: moving backward on the board, staying put, or trying harder and pick up another card.

The penalty always begins with the same negative reinforcement “Oh no!”, followed by the instructions of what to do, such as: “Move X spaces backward”, “Stay put for 1 round and think about it”, or in some cases in addition to “move backward” there is “Pick up another card, and try harder”.

The general idea is to vary the game. In order to keep attention and suspense high, try and avoid attributing the same value all the time. The number of spaces to move backward and/or stay put, or move backward and pick up another card has to be tested in trial sessions of the game in order to



make sure that the players can easily reach “excellence”, i.e., the end of the game within a reasonable time (30 – 45 minutes maximum).

### 1.2.1.3. The Wording

- ✓ Full text (content, negative reinforcement to evoke sympathetic feelings, empathy, etc., followed by the penalty).
- ✓ A story is being told highlighting situations that reduce the quality of life of nursing home residents. The stories are told from an observer’s point of view. Any kind of misbehaviour is told from an outsider’s perspective in the third person to avoid accusations or finger pointing against the players. This is to facilitate a change in perspective and make it easier to observe all the characters involved in the story in order to enhance awareness as well as reflection. The stories should also be worded in such a way as to foster sympathetic feelings and empathy. The underlying message is that improvement is possible and the invitation to do it better yourself. At the end of the text there can be an exclamation of reinforcement like “Improvement needed, so sad, etc.
- ✓ The linguistic register goes from standard to colloquial, and technical terms should be avoided.

Some examples from the learning board game:

Card # 87 - Based on Compendium D 3.3.3

Mr Heyer loves playing the piano but when he moved to the nursing home, he was not allowed to bring his piano with him, even though he is staying in a single room. So sad!

Oh no! Stay put for 1 round and think about it!

Or

Card # 86 - Based on Compendium D 3.2.5

Poor Ms Jacer. Her beloved husband passed away a year ago, and she misses him a lot. Now she is all alone. Today is her 94th birthday, but no one has organized anything special for her. So sad!

Oh no! Move 1 space backward.

### 1.2.2. The Evil Fairy Cards

The content for these cards can be taken from all categories of the Compendium.



As already mentioned above, the content reflects inappropriate behaviour. Anything that can be perceived as rude, mean or even violent is attributed to the “Evil Fairy”. It is up to her to be the protagonist of any kind of behaviour that has been mentioned.

### 1.2.2.1. How it Works

Just as the Good Fairy represents what could be perceived as wishful thinking, the Evil Fairy brings up taboos, touchy and/or very critical issues people might not even be aware of.

The Evil Fairy embodies inappropriate behaviour that nobody would easily admit to, but that can be seen in everyday life. Nevertheless, finger pointing does not help and would only spoil the “game spirit”, create frustration, feelings of anger or guilt, and would, as a consequence, lead to resistance.

Accordingly, like in fairy tales, the Evil Fairy takes on the role of the “bad guy” nobody wants to identify with. Therefore, it is important to have a character that brings up touchy issues in order to create awareness, self-reflection and, as a consequence and if necessary, a change in behaviour.

**Although we bring up taboos and very touchy issues and discuss them, players must never feel attacked, insulted, accused or shamed.**

### 1.2.2.2. The Structure

The Evil Fairy cards are part of the deck of cards with content that is detrimental to the QoL of care home residents, but do not follow the same 2-step structure. Since the character of the Evil Fairy represents the “bad guy” nobody will probably identify with, the content of these cards follows the 3-step structure described for the Good Fairy.

The first step is about how to begin. The text always begins with “The Evil Fairy was around” to signal that the Evil Fairy, and no one else, is responsible for what follows. This is important in order to ensure that the touchy issues or taboos that are being told in the story on the card are not meant to accuse or blame the players.

The second step is about the specific content: a short description of what the Evil Fairy does or has done, or what has been done (indirect speech) that is rude, violent, sad, and in any case detrimental to the QoL of the residents.

Some examples are: “The Evil Fairy called Ms Maria Maddock, a 76-year-old resident, who had had a sex change, by her former male name, chanting “I just love your name Robert!”.

The third step is a negative reinforcement. After the description of what the Evil Fairy does, another exclamation of disapproval or disdain follows that serves as a negative reinforcement: so rude, so sad, so cruel, poor Ms or Mr Smith, etc.

The three steps, as described above, are then followed by the penalty which is interlinked with the rules of the game. In other words, the players are being told what they are supposed to do, and how they are supposed to move their pawns on the learning board.

This text always begins in the same way in order to make it easy to identify that what follows is the penalty, and what it is about.

It always begins with the same negative reinforcement “Oh no!” followed by the instructions of what to do, such as: “Move X spaces backward.”, or “Move X spaces backward or pick up another card, and try harder.





The general idea is to vary the game. In order to keep attention and suspense high, try and avoid attributing the same value all the time. The number of spaces to move backward, and to move backward and pick up another card has to be tested in trial sessions of the game in order to make sure that the players can easily reach “excellence”, i.e., the end of the game within a reasonable time (30 – 45 minutes maximum).

### 1.2.2.3. The Wording

- ✓ Full text (introductory text “the Evil Fairy was around”, content, negative reinforcement, followed by punishment).
- ✓ A story is being told that depicts taboos, conscious or unconscious behaviour or actions that are inappropriate, rude or even violent, and seriously deteriorate the quality of life of care home residents. In order to avoid blaming and finger pointing, the undesired behaviour is attributed to an Evil Fairy who represents everything people should not do or say, even though such behaviour or communication might be seen in nursing homes. The Evil Fairy is the one to blame so that negative feelings that could spoil the game spirit and hinder learning will not be evoked. Accordingly, the wording uses the third person singular “the Evil Fairy”, or indirect speech, and never “you did” or “you said”. It is of the utmost importance to avoid that the players feel accused or blamed.
- ✓ The linguistic register goes from standard to colloquial and must be easy to grasp. Difficult or technical terms should be avoided.

Some examples from the learning board game:

Card # 99 Based on Compendium A 1.2.4.

The Evil Fairy was around. Mr Hogen loves to have his meals on his own in his room, but he was obliged to sit in the dining room next to a person he didn’t like at all. It totally put him off his food. Annoying!

Oh no! Move 1 space backward.

Or

Card # 101 - Based on Compendium D 3.1.2

The Evil Fairy was around! Ms Horvath suffers from dementia and wanders around all the time. She was forced to sit in an armchair with an abdominal belt to prevent her from falling, because no one could supervise her. Atrocious!

Oh no! Move 1 space backward. Pick up another card, and try harder.

## 1.3. Cards for Professional Care Staff (Awards)

This deck of cards is for professional care staff only, and is used exclusively when professional carers are playing with other professional carers. The cards focus on specific knowledge that the players are supposed to have and is related to the criteria listed in the Compendium.



The content for these cards can be taken from all categories of the Compendium but can also be drawn from the professional day-to-day practices and experiences of professional carers that might not be listed in the Compendium (e.g., lack of time, so they are not able to do everything they would like to do).

### 1.3.1. How it Works

The wording of the content is supposed to inspire the players to reflect on what is being narrated or asked, and engage in further inquiry, even more so when the player does not know the answer or does not know it fully and/or is not able to complete the task.

The content of the card can be worded as a best practice, a task, or questions to be answered by the player. However, it is important that the questions/tasks are worded in a way that there is no need for further help from somebody else like a Game Coach.

Since there are different levels of expertise among professional carers, and apprentices too are invited to play the game with their more experienced colleagues, it is important to word the content to avoid players feeling stupid if they do not know the answer. People might feel ashamed because they do not know what some technical terms or difficult expressions mean. Accordingly, it is important to always offer easy-to-grasp explanations to whatever might not be evident to all players, and, at the same time, encourage them to learn more.

It is very important to word the content, be it a question, a story or a task to complete, in a way that inspires the players to learn more, especially when they do not know the answer to a question or are unable to complete a task. **The players must never feel blamed or ashamed if they do not know what to answer or do.**

### 1.3.2. The Structure

The content can be organised in different ways. Any of the structures mentioned above can be used: the 3-step, or the 2-step approach.

The content is mainly a task to be completed, or questions to be answered. It can also be a story about a best practice on some specific professional knowledge or skills that laypeople do not necessarily possess. It could also be worded on the basis of the pattern of a Good Fairy card where the Good Fairy grants one or more wishes that the players are allowed to express, etc.

Generally speaking, this deck of cards is for professional carers who can follow any of the structures of the other card decks for the game without a Game Coach. Accordingly, the awards too can follow different rules. Awards, however, should be an encouragement for the professional carers that also express appreciation for the work they are doing. Accordingly, they always start off with “Keep up with the good work” followed by the instructions on what to do (e.g., move forward or stay put).

For example, players can be rewarded for a best practice. In this case the award will be the permission to move forward: “Keep up the good work! Move X spaces forward”.

Another option is to award the players for their specific knowledge or activities: “Keep up the good work! Move 1 space forward for every ‘item’ you know of/you do”. In this case and according to the specific content of the task, you have two different options: either you set a time frame within which the players have to answer; or you limit the maximum number of “items” that can be listed by the



players. This is because it is important for two reasons: a) the game should not end too early because the number of items a player lists is too long and, therefore, the team would advance too many squares in one go; and b) the game should not be boring because a player takes far too much time to answer.

If the player does not know the answer or cannot provide the required information, s/he is asked to stay put for one round and think about it (“Keep up the good work! Move 1 space forward for every XY you know of/you do. If you do not know of/do any, stay put and think about it.”).

### 1.3.3. The Wording

- ✓ Full text that can follow the structure and rules of any of the above card categories (2-step or 3-step approach). The text is followed by an award that is introduced by “Keep up the good work”, followed by the instructions on what to do: move forward or stay put.
- ✓ The content is a story, a best practice, a task or questions that refer to the care professions and might contain a technical term or concept a professional carer should be familiar with. Nevertheless, the wording should be easy to grasp, enhance natural curiosity, and stimulate the desire to learn more. It should in any case evoke positive feelings in the players or, in the worst-case scenario, make them reflect if they are unable to answer the questions or fulfil the tasks. The questions can be open or be worded as tasks such as please name 3 qualities, birthdays, activities, etc.
- ✓ The linguistic register is standard but can contain technical terms or expressions with explanations in plain language.

Some examples from the learning board game:

Card # 112 - Not based on the Compendium

It's your lucky day! The Good Fairy has given you the time to do 3 things in the nursing home you never find the time for. Tell us which 3 things you would like to do.

Keep up the good work! You've got 2 minutes to answer. Move 1 space forward for each thing you will do. Otherwise stay put.

Or

Card # 115 - Based on the Compendium P 2.2.2.

Can you make any suggestions on how to promote the physical activity of the residents? Think of something fun!

Keep up the good work! You have got 2 minutes to answer. Move 1 space forward for every activity. If nothing comes to mind, stay put.

Or



Card # 111 – Based on the Compendium A 2.2.3.

Awesome! Your reminiscence therapy group session and review of personal photos has brought the group members closer together. Well done!

Keep up the good work! Move 2 spaces forward.

## **1.4. Format of Cards for the Game Version with a Game Coach (Awards)**

The content of these cards can be taken from all categories of the Compendium.

### **1.4.1. How it Works**

The content of the playing cards, to be used exclusively when there is a Game Coach, is always about activities or tasks that must be carried out by a team. The tasks have to be accomplished with the collaboration of all team members.

This version of the game adds special focus on team work, cross-functional exchange on the objectives of the learning board game without a Game Coach as well as collaboration between all players irrespective of their roles: professional carers, volunteers, family members, or even residents.

The content presents situations drawn from real stories of nursing homes that relate to one or more quality criteria listed in the Compendium. It can refer to what the players know about a specific topic, what is important to them or what makes life good or worthwhile in their opinion.

The team work helps sharpen awareness of what counts for individual players, and, at the same time, learn about other people's opinions and values. Accordingly, it helps to change perspective, foster empathy, learn that all human beings have fundamentally the same needs, but satisfy them in many different ways, depending on their personal preferences, cultural background, and age.

### **1.4.2. The Structure**

The cards for the game with Game Coach are different from all the other cards. As the content is a task, then the way it is structured depends on the task to be accomplished.

There may be a story that introduces the task. The task might be embedded in the context of the story. An example could be an architect who has been commissioned to build a new nursing home, and the team and all its members are called to advise the architect. They are asked to list everything that should be in the building to guarantee the highest possible quality of life for the older people.



It is also possible to directly come up with the task thinking, for example, of fun sports that could be offered to the nursing home residents in order to broaden the existing offer.

The tasks can be chosen among a variety of different options such as:

- group discussions based on personal values and opinions with the ultimate goal being a common strategy to improve a given issue or situation;
- creative brainstorming to develop new offers or services for care home residents;
- creative brainstorming to come up with suggestions to create an excellent built environment or improve the existing built environment;
- group discussions on what has to be considered appropriate and respectful when it comes to communication with care home residents (based on real life examples);
- experiential exercises about awareness and human perception.

Generally speaking, the structure depends on the type of task but has to offer a description of what the team is supposed to do. The content of these cards can exceed the maximum length of 50 words.

The description of the task is followed by the awards which can be different from each other and depend on the task to be accomplished. In any case there is always an award, be it only permission to resume playing the board game. There is never a penalty for this card category.

#### **1.4.3. The Wording of the Playing Cards for the Players**

- ✓ Full text, a story and/or tasks to be accomplished by the entire team.
- ✓ The text can tell a story or a situation the players are told to pretend they are characters in that story or situation. The task to be accomplished by the entire team is explained in the card and is followed by the award the team receives for the task. More detailed instructions, such as the time frame, how to complete the task, the material at the players' disposal, etc. are delivered by the Game Coach who guides the players through the game.
- ✓ The linguistic register is standard and/or colloquial depending on the story or task. If technical terms are being used, they have to be explained.

Examples:

Card # 120 Compendium P 2.1.

Your team has been called to advise an architect who is in charge of building a new nursing home. Please make a list of all features the nursing home should include. Think of everything that adds value to the life of the residents, such as: a garden, endless corridors, shops, etc. Be creative and think of everything the residents need to socialize, to make friends, for recreational activities, for private meetings, for prayer, etc. Include barrier-free accessibility, colour schemes, etc.

The team who comes up with more features or options wins the contest and is allowed to move 3 spaces forward. The other team moves 1 space forward.



#### 1.4.4. Additional Information and Instructions for the Game Coach

It is up to the Game Coach to provide all the details and information the teams need to accomplish the tasks and guide them through the game.

The Game Coach therefore is given additional information about:

- ✓ The educational objectives
- ✓ Recommended time schedule
- ✓ Venues and equipment as well as materials needed, including their quantity
- ✓ Minimum/maximum number of players and teams
- ✓ Factors requiring special attention
- ✓ How to guide the players:
  - Instructions for the exercise (briefing);
  - Instructions for the spokespersons of the teams on how to present the result of the team work;
  - How to moderate the exercise while the teams are working on the task;
  - How to give feedback after the presentation of the work accomplished by the teams (debriefing) and additional options for the debriefing;
- ✓ How to determine the winning teams.

##### 1.4.4.1. The Educational Objectives

This section provides the Game Coach with the educational objectives of the specific card content. Besides the specific content of every single card, the educational objective of all the cards of the learning board game with a Game Coach is to enhance teamwork and collaboration across functions as well as knowledge sharing, exchange of experience, change of perspective and learning from each other<sup>5</sup>. This is important in order to continuously improve the QoL of care home residents.

According to the specific card content and the task to be accomplished by the team, there might be additional learning objectives, such as, for example:

- increase player's knowledge about specific topics;
- increase players' awareness of what quality of life for care home residents is about;
- inspire players to come up with new ideas to put into practice to increase the QoL of older people; etc.

This list of educational objectives is not exhaustive. Further information on all educational objectives of the learning board game is available in IO2 [Learning Goals and Educational Objectives](#).

##### 1.4.4.2. Recommended Time Schedule

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf, IO2 Educational Objectives, Objective 2.6. Motivate to continuously learn, improve and cooperate



It is important to offer the Game Coach reliable information on the time needed for the different steps of the tasks to be accomplished by the team as well as the time required for the briefing, debriefing, etc.

The recommended time schedule refers to the number of players and teams shown in the instructions for the Game Coach. Increasing or reducing the number of players or teams changes the time required for every single card.

As time is one of the most valuable resources in a nursing home, it is important to manage it well, be able to plan the entire learning board game session ahead of time, and make sure there is enough time available to get from “start” to “excellence”.

The time schedule should include:

- Time for the instructions for the exercise given by the Game Coach;
- Time for the team to accomplish the task;
- Time to present the team work;
- Time for the debriefing and assignment of the award;
- as well as
- The total time needed for each card.

#### **1.4.4.3. Venues and Equipment**

Depending on the content of each card for the learning board game with a Game Coach, it is necessary to provide the space and the equipment that the Game Coach, the playing teams and their members need in order to accomplish what they are asked to do by the content of the card.

According to the tasks to be accomplished, the following items offer some examples of what might have to be provided. The list is not exhaustive and has to be adapted to the number of people who are playing as well as the task to be accomplished.

It is of the utmost importance, though, to give the Coach all the necessary information beforehand in order to be ready when starting to play.

Some examples:

- Game table suitable for the number of players.
- Sufficient space so that the teams can perform their tasks undisturbed and separately.
- Enough chairs for all players and a worktable for each team where they can write down their ideas and suggestions.
- A flipchart or a free wall on which the results of the group work can be hung up.
- Paper, pens, post-its.

#### **1.4.4.4. Minimum/Maximum Number of Players and Teams**

The minimum or maximum number of players must not be neglected under any circumstances. If the number of players is too small, team work is not possible. At the same time, if there are only 3 players, it is impossible to build teams that work together and compete with each other.

On the other hand, it is just as important that the number of players is not too large. This is because it would be impossible to find space for them at the table, and there would be no guarantee that



each player would be actively involved in the team work. In addition, the time needed to accomplish the task increases.

#### **1.4.4.5. Aspects Requiring Special Attention**

In this section the Game Coach needs instructions on what is important to keep in mind such as a diverse group of players where, for example, some bring a lot of expertise and professional skills, or have a different cultural background, or where there is a significant age difference between individual players.

The Game Coach needs advice on how to create the teams in order to guarantee that the conditions are as equal as possible for all teams.

Other special features could be a particularly sensitive topic or even a taboo subject requiring a great deal of tact.

In conclusion, in this section the Game Coach needs to be instructed on possible pitfalls, and how to avoid them.

#### **1.4.4.6. Instructions on How to Guide the Players While Working on The Task**

The Game Coach needs instructions on how to explain to the teams what they have to do, in other words ensure that s/he gives the necessary instructions for the exercise in question. This is called briefing. For example, it might be helpful that the Game Coach reads the card content aloud or asks a player of one of the teams to do so.

In addition, these instructions offer the Game Coach a sort of a check list of all the things s/he has to tell the players, such as for example:

- What the task exactly is about, and what it includes.
- If both teams have the same task to fulfil.
- Where the different teams will work on the task.
- How the teams should work together, like respecting each other, and each other's opinions, etc.
- If they need to appoint a moderator and a spokesperson.
- What kind of equipment and/or materials the teams will receive to accomplish the task.
- The time available for the team work, and the presentation of the teamwork.

In addition, the Game Coach needs instructions on how to prepare the spokespersons of the teams for their task (if this role is required as part of the exercise on the card).

Further instructions for the Game Coach are needed on how to moderate the teamwork while the teams are working on the task, for example how the Coach can support their efforts without helping them to accomplish the task itself.

Last but not least, instructions are needed on how to provide feedback after the teams have accomplished the task in order to make sure their work and the contribution of every single player are appreciated.

The awards can be chosen among different options and depend on the task.





If the task is about suggestions the team has to make for further physical activities or sports that could be offered in the nursing home, the winning team could be the one who comes up with more suggestions. In other words, it would be the sheer quantity to decide the winning team.

In this case, the team that has made the most suggestions could be allowed to advance more spaces than the team that has made fewer suggestions.

However, if the task is to discuss a contentious issue, listen to all the opinions and then maybe develop a team position. In this case, it is not advisable to pick one team as the winner. It is always important to value and listen to every opinion equally, as long as this is done respectfully. If this is done in a way that is not respectful, it is not the opinion itself but the way in which it is expressed that is objectionable. As a consequence, for this kind of task there should be no winner, but both teams should be allowed to go back to the game board and resume playing with the other cards after having completed the task.

Another option is to have all teams advance the same number of spaces as a reward for the teamwork done.