

„Café Dementi - Online mit Anfängergeist“

Every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday between 4 and 5 pm, around ten to twelve people meet in our “Café Dementi – Online with Beginner’s Mind”. For guests who visit us from Austria, Germany, Croatia, Swiss and Turkey, this virtual space has grown into their local hangout. What is it that they share? They are out and about in “**Dementia district**”, as residents, as next of kin, as experts, future residents or they just dropped in by coincidence. Wandering through the streets of this part of town – and it must not become a Ghetto - they passed this small tavern, brightly lit, heard the music playing and people laughing and maybe just felt intrigued to enter this “small pub where nobody asks what you have and who you are”, this being the secret hymn of this zoom café, which has been opening its virtual doors for three years, three times a week, 50 times a year, since March 27th 2020, to be exact.

Beginner’s Mind

For some, the format we developed, is one of the few positive side effects of the years of the pandemic. Katharina Klee, volunteering supporter of PROMENZ, has launched it to help the users of this self-help group by and for forgetful people get acquainted with visual telephony, in order to make it possible to participate in group meetings not only by telephone. Powered by the technophile spirit of the first guests, those affected, their friends and family as well as the PROMENZ board, the format was developed – also thanks to the lock down

International Guests

On each day we are open, interested parties are invited per newsletter and on Facebook. This newsletter includes a short description of our last meeting as well as a screenshot. When the pub opens at 4 pm, the guests, most of the time between 10 and 12 persons, are arriving from all directions. For some of them it is difficult to leave the house. One is living in Turkey, the other one often stays in her home in Croatia. And then there is the special German-Austrian friendship with lots of humor and a certain wit.

The power of thumbs

One highlight of the agenda – comparable to the smallest order at the pub – is and always was the participation in thumb yoga. To the founding principle of the Japanese neurologist Yoshiya Hasgawa and some of his exercises, the virtual landlady added exercises from TCM. All guests from all backgrounds enjoyed breathing together, found comfort in the relaxing movements, even guests who are already far along the way of their illness still feel the positive results of this fixture of the café with its rituals.

News and a hymn

Another activity on the agenda of this online format is the information section which is created by our users. During the last three years, this 15 minute format included topics such as the history of the vinyl record as well as daily news, or "Radio Rudolfshügel" by Richard Wissinger who tells us historical as well as bizarre facts about the day of our meeting. The last 15 minutes are full of music and our special hymn, a Youtube slide show of Screenshots from Cafés past accompanied by the Song "Das kleine Beisl" ("The small pub") by Peter Alexander, a famous Austrian crooner.

Schau vorbei, wenn Du in der Gegend bist, wir freuen uns auf Dich.

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Katharina Klee, MSc, is a psychosocial counselor on a systemic basis. Since 2020 she has acted as a "virtin" on the formats she developed "Café PROMENZ - online with a beginner's spirit", three times a week with guests with more or less forgetfulness and the "Café Auszeit - the cultivated pub for carers" for caring and related both zoom formats are popular with guests from Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Croatia.

„Café Auszeit- das gepflegte Beisl für Pflegende“

Just like the guests of “Café Dementi – Online with pioneer spirit” travel through the dementia district of this city, the guests of “Café timeout – the caring pub for caregivers” are moving in the central district of care work. In September 2020, Birgit Meinrad Schiebel from IG Pflege (an interest group for people working in care) encouraged and motivated me to create this format.

Share resources

. Drawing from my experience when I was taking care of my mother in Rum, close to Innsbruck, I wanted to create a place that would have made it possible to have a timeout within earshot of my mother. Everybody visits here sooner or later, be it privately or professionally. Once a month, the virtual Café offers one and a half comfortable, comforting and enriching hours - we are sharing resources, courage as well as stoicism, words and deeds – no special illness is dominating. Among the guests is a caring partner of a woman with a dementia disease as well as the mother of a chronically ill child or an expert for care work, etc.

This is how the light comes in

We have shared a lot in these new rooms, friendships flourished as well as alliances. Mostly women meet here, from their thirties to their seventies, share plans, special knowledge, sometimes even recipes and household tips. Small children, dogs and cats, a glass of wine or a cigarette, people can enjoy everything that they like in their time off. Also “Café Timeout” is accompanied by a newsletter including a “save the date” as well as a summary of last time’s best tips. And we also have our hymn: Leonhard Cohen’s “The Anthem”: “There is a crack in everything – this is how the light comes in.”

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