



# Empathetic encounters

Authors of the idea: Challenge Yourself – Karina Cienciała and Aneta Gadzińska

## About the idea

„Empathetic encounters” is a solution that involves connecting novice therapists, psychologists, personal development trainers or coaches (people who have broadly developed empathic conversation skills) and the elderly, including those aggrieved by Nazism. Elderly people who survived the war often struggle with traumatic memories – intensified due to senile dementia, loneliness, apathy and a sense of social uselessness, and thus: lack of meaning in life, often depression. The conversation offers a respite, a sense of acceptance, it would defuse difficult emotions, tame fears and make the seniors feel less lonely.

Individual meetings could take place in the seniors’ place of residence, and group meetings – in seniors’ homes (care facilities) or in public spaces.

The authors of the idea, when designing the solution, were inspired by the assumptions of Non-Violent Communication – a method of communication, also known as the Language of the Heart.

## Benefits of the idea

For specialists developing their skills, practicing empathic meetings is an invaluable experience in their development path, and the opportunity to talk with people who can share their wisdom in life – a huge added value.

For seniors, such meetings are an opportunity to contact another person who offers their time, full attention and understanding.

Individual meetings with a specialist, based on trust, a sense of security and a building of a relationship, allow the senior to gradually gain confidence and encourage him or her to participate in group meetings. There, seniors, in the presence of an already familiar volunteer trainer, in a friendly space will have the opportunity to establish new relationships, create a community and regain a sense of being a part of society again.

*The presence soothes – a community empowers.  
The idea of the solution is based on presence and empathic conversations, the safe space of which allows seniors to open up to relationships with other seniors and to co-creating new communities*

Karina Cienciała

Do you want to know more about this idea? Go to the website:  
[www.inicjatorpomocy.pl/en](http://www.inicjatorpomocy.pl/en)

### „Inicjator PoMocy”

The „Inicjator PoMocy” competition (eng. „emPOWERment Initiator”) is part of the „PoMoc. Together, we can do more” implemented by the Shipyard Foundation on behalf of the EVZ Foundation (Remembrance, Responsibility and Future). In the competition, we were looking for innovative ideas aimed at improving the quality of life of Nazi persecution survivors.

### **The competition is funded by the EVZ (Remembrance, Responsibility and Future) Foundation.**

In remembrance of the victims of National Socialist injustice, EVZ Foundation works to promote human rights and understanding between peoples. The Foundation is thus an expression of the continuing political and moral responsibility of the German state, the private sector and society as a whole for Nazi injustice and towards the victims.

More at [www.stiftung-evz.de](http://www.stiftung-evz.de).

### **The organizer of the „emPOWERment Initiator” competition is the Shipyard Foundation.**

For over 10 years, we have been creating and supporting effective solutions to social problems, involving citizens in deciding on public matters as well as helping other organizations and institutions to better plan and conduct their social activities.

More at [www.stocznia.org.pl](http://www.stocznia.org.pl).