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**ALONE**

Innovative Health Professionals Training Program on  
Existential Loneliness among Older People

# NEWSLETTER

#1 - 12/03/2020

## LAUNCH OF THE “ALONE” PROJECT

### SOLITUDE AMONG OLDER PERSONS: A GROWING ISSUE

Loneliness among older people is a growing issue globally, even if the numbers are difficult to estimate as loneliness most commonly is measured as social loneliness only. Social loneliness embraces social aspects needs for human relationships and is often measured in the form of the number of contacts someone has, how extensive the social network is, cohabitation or not, etc.

Loneliness is, however, a complex concept that also involves physical as existential dimensions. The physical dimension involves the need closeness and touch, while loneliness in its existential form runs much deeper than social and physical loneliness and is described as an unavoidable condition of humanity. This means that even if other people surround you, you can experience profound loneliness in its existential form. Existential loneliness is usually described in association with death, dying, and cancer when questions about the meaning of life come to the fore. Studies involving health care staff (physicians, registered nurses, assistant nurses, social workers, physio- and occupational therapists) shows that the staff's encounter with older people's existential loneliness was experienced as both meaningful and challenging.

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## WHAT WILL ALONE DO?

The ALONE project has been funded under the Erasmus+ KA2 programme.

It has two main objectives:

- 1) To educate health care professionals about the different dimensions of loneliness to be able to detect and recognize loneliness in all its forms among older people;
- 2) To encourage health care professionals and strengthen their ability to encounter loneliness in general and existential loneliness in particular.

The project is going to develop a training package for nurses and other health care professionals who currently have limited or no training in how to cope with older persons affected by existential loneliness.

By increasing knowledge and awareness about these aspects among partners and their networks, the project will also promote a broader health and social dialogue about the need to have adequate training on dealing with loneliness among older people in order to provide better patient care, increase life expectancy.

## THE PARTNERSHIP

ALONE is implemented by a transnational partnership involving five European countries.

The project is coordinated by the University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz (Poland) and it will be implemented by a multi-disciplinary consortium involving both academics and practitioners: the Board of Nurses from Iasi (Romania), the Italian NGO Anziani e non solo, the Klaipeda State University of Applied Sciences (Lithuania) and Kristianstad University in Sweden.

## 1ST TRANSNATIONAL PARTNER MEETING IN LODZ

The first meeting of the partnership was held in Lodz in January 2020.

Hosted by the coordinator, the University of Humanities and Economics, the meeting was a great opportunity for team-building and to start planning the first project activities, which include the release of intellectual output one (a collection of Best practice from health organizations and patient perspective on existential loneliness) and output two (a report about the limitations in caring older persons related to existential loneliness encountered by healthcare professionals) which will help us shaping the educational material.

## DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To learn more about the project please visit our website [www.aloneproject.eu](http://www.aloneproject.eu) or follow us on the most popular social networks with #ALONE\_PROJECT

