
POSTER ABSTRACT

A plea for a meaningful life ... on the road with your own network

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If someone becomes seriously ill, has a child with a disability, has a serious accident... a lot of organization is needed to arrange all medical care and necessary support for that person (and often for the family as well).

People testify; you are overwhelmed by your illness, you do what needs to be done, you go into survival mode... This survival mode is a major force in making sure people can arrange everything that needs to be arranged, but it also results in disregarding important questions such as 'what do I really want now?', 'how do I feel good in this situation?', 'how do I survive in the long term?'.

Fortunately, in such moments there are often other people like family and friends, who think of the "small bearers of luck in life": which music can be played in their room, which friend can join them at a treatment, which cake is to be taken to the rehabilitation centre, how can the parents recharge their own batteries so they can keep on going? ...

Important human gestures, close ones and relatives who stay involved, fight for what's important, don't let go, are as important as good medical care and support.

People who call on Lus feel the need for a strong(er) "back-up group" or "loop (lus)" of family and friends, because they want to build a good and happy life, not just survive...

Lus-groups meet this requirement. Volunteers ensure that a Lus-meeting is guided so that subjects/themes that really matter are discussed. Concerns are talked about and plans are made to engage, also in fun things. All participants assess in what way(s) the central person's talents/interests/wishes stay at the center of the gatherings. They discuss problems, celebrate/share successes and express gratitude. Great and small, genuine concerns are shared so that people can lead a meaningful life again. Having conversations that really matter, making choices based on this knowledge, those are the strengths of our groups.

Over time we see that people in Lus-groups slowly regain control of their own lives again and reciprocity grows back: the central person takes on the hosting, he helps an other,

People have been meeting in Lus-groups in Flanders for 20 years. At this time there are 120 active groups. This way, 700 people are involved in the lives of others and we form a web of caring Flemish citizens.

As a result of the expertise we built in our Lus-groups, we designed a model that highlights the 4 key elements of every lus-group. In the workshop we want to discuss those 4 themes. Through small exercises and testimonials we want to let the participants feel the Lus-vibe!