

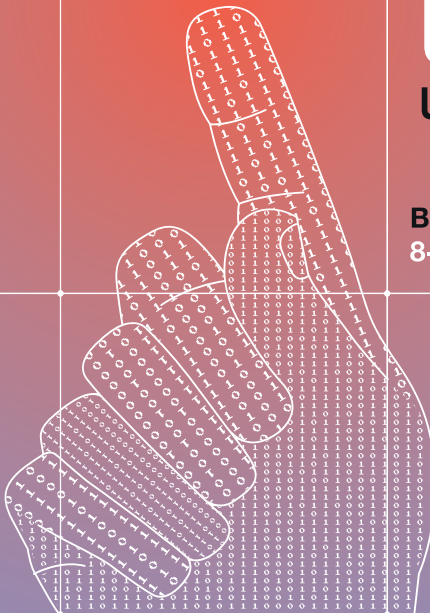
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XXIII IFOTES  
INTERNATIONAL  
CONGRESS

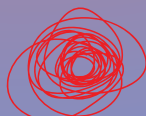
# The human touch

↳ the **power of presence**

Budapest (Hungary)  
8-12 July 2026



**PROGRAMME**



EMOTIONAL HEALTH

**IFOTES**  
International Federation of  
Telephone Emergency Services

**LESZ**  
116 123



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**XXIII IFOTES  
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**PROGRAMME**



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# The human touch

↳ the **power of presence**

FOREWORDS

# The human touch

↳ the power of presence FOREWORDS



**IFOTES**  
International Federation of Telephone Emergency Services

**Sonja KARRER**  
IFOTES President

Following the last congress in 2023 in Lignano, I am very pleased that we are once again able to organize a summer congress, this time in Hungary. I would like to sincerely thank LESZ Hungary for their assistance and excellent collaboration.

We still live in a time of change and turmoil. After 2023, I had hoped for more peaceful times ahead – unfortunately, this is not the case. Now more than ever, human connection and emotional support through helplines are of great importance. At this congress, we will address the challenges and opportunities of Artificial Intelligence (AI). One thing is clear: AI cannot replace the people who work in telephone services. However, it can lighten their workload, assist in quality assurance, and be available around the clock. But can AI “read between the lines,” understand sensitive contexts, and respond appropriately? Perhaps someday...

But I am glad that there are still people with genuine empathy working at the helplines. AI certainly offers exciting and helpful possibilities, but it must be used carefully and thoughtfully. The power of human presence is irreplaceable!

I am looking forward to the “human touch” and personal encounters from person to person in Budapest. Besides many exciting lectures and workshops on the topic, the city of Budapest surely has a lot to offer.

Sonja Karrer

P.S. After 7 years in office, this will be my last congress as President of IFOTES. It has been an honor and a great enrichment for me to serve in this role. I am always deeply impressed by the work of the volunteers.

Thank you all for your tremendous commitment, I wish you the best from the bottom of my heart!



**LESZ**  
116 123

**Erika DUDÀS**  
LESZ President

Dear Congress Participants,

The time has come for the IFOTES Congress in Budapest. We, Hungarian volunteers, warmly welcome you to one of Europe’s most beautiful cities, Budapest!

We have been preparing for a long time to meet you, to share our experiences, broaden our knowledge, and enjoy meaningful and positive moments together in person. We sincerely hope that from the very first moments you will feel at home among us, and that these days will be enriching for you not only professionally, but also on a personal level.

It is a special joy for us to see so many dedicated people with a shared commitment to helping others gathered here – this is inspiring and gives us strength.

We would like to express our gratitude to the leaders of IFOTES, the organizers of the congress, the speakers, workshop leaders, contributors, and volunteers whose work makes these professional and human encounters both successful and enjoyable.

On behalf of the 550 volunteers of the Hungarian Association of Telephone Emergency Services, I

hope that we can grow closer to one another and get to know each other’s achievements and plans – not only during the congress, but in the years to come as well.

Our board and the leaders of our member services consider both national cooperation and international collaboration, including cross-border partnerships, to be of great importance. We trust that this congress will create new opportunities and may even mark the beginning of long-term cooperation between volunteer teams from Hungary and other countries.

We wish you a congress filled with lasting and meaningful memories, and we hope that the experiences you gain here will bring you back to Hungary again.

With respect and warm regards.



KULTURÁLIS ÉS INNOVÁCIÓS  
MINISZTERIUM

**Balázs  
MAJZIK**

Head of Department of Prevention  
National Centre for Public Health and  
Pharmacy

This is a particularly sensitive area where human presence, trust, and empathy remain irreplaceable. Supporting young people and vulnerable groups is not merely a professional duty, but also our shared social responsibility. Artificial intelligence offers new opportunities in the field of support: in data analysis, the early identification of vulnerable groups, and the development of new forms of education and emotional support. At the same time, it is important to recognize that algorithms cannot replace human attention and personal care.

The central theme of IFOTES Congress 2026 in Budapest – “The Human Touch – The Power of Presence” – is especially relevant today. The conference emphasizes that human connection, empathy, and community support remain essential values in the digital age. The daily work of professionals, caregivers, and volunteers shows that real change begins with human presence. Technology can support this work, but healing and prevention still depend on acceptance, trust, and attentive care.

This conference offers a shared opportunity to initiate a dialogue on the future of healthcare, emotional support, and artificial intelligence. A future where innovation and human values are

not at odds with one another but rather reinforce each other.

During the conference break, I highly recommend visiting Budapest’s landmarks. I wish you productive discussions and a pleasant time.



EMOTIONAL HEALTH

The Congress  
Scientific Committee

Barbara JENKO  
Yaël LIEBKIND  
Melinda MEDGYASZAI  
Bettina SCHWAB  
Mit VAN PAESSCHEN

The 21st century brought us leaps and bounds in artificial intelligence’s (AI) development, and a new reality along with it. AI technology has become inevitable in our daily lives, we lean on it heavily for the most mundane tasks like shopping, as well as for complex and delicate functions like aircraft control. It has proven advantages and is a useful tool to overcome or mitigate even human errors. But a number of questions remain:

- What is real, what is virtual?
- Is AI sophisticated enough to replace essential human connections?
- Can AI provide real relief and comfort to those of us who are suffering, grieving, or lonely?
- Can it stand in for human presence, compassion, empathy?

Accepting the reality of AI means to understand it in full, taking into account the context, the environment, and the concrete situations it can be used in. Real life is messy and complicated, human beings have their own cognitive and emotional abilities, their past and their circumstances. Every individual person and their specific reality are unique and valuable. Human values, which we rely upon, like courage, creativity, empathy, humour, reconnecting, solidarity, and kindness, are permanent features of our emotional landscape. Our own achievements through blood, sweat and tears are

always more rewarding than what is handed to us without effort. The way we experience our awareness of being is closely related to our experiences, personal histories and the culture and the society we come from. Authentic human responses can only arise from authentic sources, with consideration and respect.

A human brain is a system of neural networks forming an unrepeatable identity.

Cognitive neuroscience has shown that we have the capability to gain solace from meaningful connections. A chatbot, a virtual interaction that can simulate a human conversation, has the potential to brush the surface and provide immediate emotional support – and fits into the manner in which our society seeks fast and superficial solutions.

But is that all we need? Truly effective emotional support has to reach the deep complexity of the individual, and this requires time, persistence, reciprocity and bravery.

Helplines are flexible enough to rise to the challenge: to learn, to empower without overpowering, and to accept and incorporate suitable AI tools where they can be useful. Helpline volunteers will remain present for callers as human beings with feelings, humour, lived experience, a deep understanding of errors and failing, and the added bonus of courage and kindness.

# The human touch

↳ the **power of presence** ORGANISERS AND PARTNERS

## ORGANISERS



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# The human touch

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## THE CONGRESS THEME

### THE HUMAN TOUCH – The power of presence

The rapid **development of artificial intelligence (AI)** in the 21st century has brought **radical transformation** to our daily lives. Yet, many questions remain about AI's true quality, purpose, usefulness, and its impact - especially when it comes to human connection. **Core human values such as courage, creativity, empathy, humor, reconnection, solidarity, and kindness remain unquestionably important.** While chatbots and virtual interactions can mimic human conversation, we must ask: is that enough? Genuine, reliable human responses must be rooted in trust, consideration, and respect. Help-lines are flexible enough to embrace appropriate AI tools, but they continue to provide the vital “human touch” that many callers still seek and need.

**CONGRESS SCIENTIFIC FORMAT and LOCATION**

**MAIN SESSIONS**

Plenary Sessions are scheduled on July 9, 10, 11, 12 mornings. They are open to all registered participants; no reservations are required. Plenary sessions take place in the North Building of ELTE University. Presentations can be followed both from the Gömb Aula (ground floor) and from the Konferencia Room located below it (level -1). The two halls are connected and allow direct interaction, including the possibility of asking questions.

**THEMATIC SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS**

Thematic lectures and workshops are scheduled on July 9, 10, 11 mornings, 9 and 11 afternoons.

**Thematic Sessions**

Two thematic sessions take place in parallel, one in the Gömb Aula and the other in the Konferencia Room (North Building). Thematic sessions in the morning last 90 minutes and include two speakers. Thematic sessions in the afternoon last 60 minutes and include one speaker, allowing more time for interaction with the audience (Q&A). Please check the programme to see in which room your thematic session is located.

**Workshops**

**In the morning** workshops last 90 minutes and start after the coffee-break. **In the afternoon** workshops last 120 minutes, except workshops WA21a and WA21b which last 60 minutes. Coffee-breaks are included. Workshops take place mainly in the South Building of ELTE University. A few workshops are held in the North Building or outdoors. Each workshop room is identified by a poster displaying the workshop title and code on the door. Detailed information can be found in the workshop overview.

Please get to your session on time and remember to switch off or silence your mobile phone during all sessions!

**POSTERS**

Posters about TES projects are displayed throughout the congress on the ground floor of the South Building. Two dedicated sessions are scheduled for the presentation and discussion of the posters with their authors: Thursday, July 9th, 13:00 – 14.00 PM Saturday, July 11th, 13:00 – 14.00 PM

**Volunteers wearing red IFOTES shirts are also available to assist you. Please do not hesitate to ask them for information or support.**

**CONGRESS LANGUAGES**

Congress languages are **English, Hungarian, German, French and Italian**. Simultaneous translation from and to all languages are provided during the **Main Sessions**.

**Thematic Sessions** are held either in English with translation into German, French and Italian, or in German/Hungarian with translation into Hungarian/German.

Please refer to the Program for information on languages and translations available for each session.

All lectures are live-streamed and audio-video recorded.

**Workshops** are held in one language. A few workshops are held in two languages or do not require knowledge of a specific language. Detailed information can be found in the workshop overview.

**TRANSLATION EQUIPMENT**

Participants can collect the receivers and earphones for the translation service at the equipment desk located in the registration hall upon arrival and after registration. They may keep the equipment until the end of the congress, accepting responsibility for replacement costs in case of loss or damage.

The receivers can be used in all halls where translation services are available.

**CONGRESS BADGE**

The activities selected by participants during registration are indicated on the back of their personal badges.

Each registered participant receives a name badge at the registrations desk. Please remember to wear your badge visibly at all times, as it is required for access to the congress halls at ELTE University.

**PARTICIPATION DETAILS**

**CONGRESS FEE INCLUDE**

- Entrance to all scientific activities
- Congress bag with documentation and materials
- Welcome Reception on the 8th of July evening
- Daily Coffee Breaks

**CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE**

Upon request, a certificate of attendance will be issued at the secretariat desk or sent at the end of the congress.

**CONGRESS DESKS**

The registration desk and congress secretariat are located near the Gömb Aula in the North Building and are open every day from 8:30 until the end of the scheduled congress activities.

**REGISTRATION DESK**

The Professional Congress Organizer (PCO) Key Congressi is responsible for managing participant registrations and handling bookings for thematic sessions, workshops, and the Welcome Reception: **registration@ifotes.org**

**SOCIAL ACTIVITIES DESK**

The Professional Congress Organizer (PCO) Trivent is responsible for managing bookings for the Farewell Evening and the guided tours: **trivent@trivent.hu**

**IFOTES CONGRESS SECRETARIAT**

**The IFOTES Congress Secretariat** is located near the Gömb Aula, and provides general information about the congress programme, as well as promotional and informational materials. It also offers information and support to speakers and workshop leaders. **congress@ifotes.org**

## INFO AREAS

### UPDATED INFORMATION and MESSAGE BOARD

Daily information and updates will be displayed on monitors located in the atrium of the ELTE North Building.  
A message board will be available to participants to exchange messages and other information.

### INFORMATION & PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS AREA

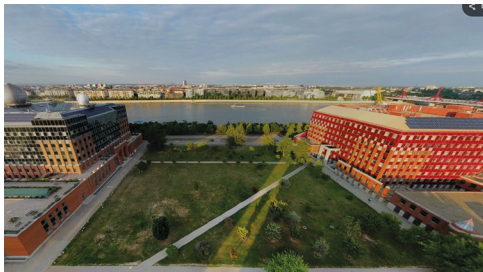
An area for sharing informational and promotional materials related to TES activities is available on the ground floor of the South Building, next to the poster area.



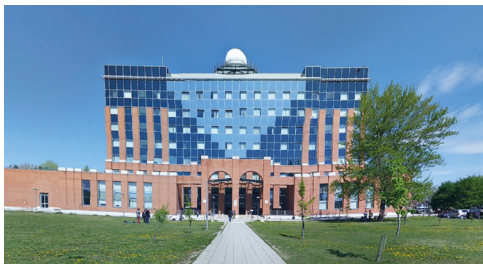
## CONGRESS VENUE

### Elte University

Budapest, Pázmány Péter stny. 1/C, 1117 Hungary



The North Building and the South Building are located opposite each other, separated by a walkway of approximately 100 metres.



### North Building

Main Sessions and Thematic Sessions  
Welcome Reception and Farewell  
Evening  
Coffee-break area  
Registration desk  
Social activities desk  
IFOTES Secretariat  
Info point  
Silent Room



### South Building

Workshops  
Poster area and TES materials  
Exhibition "Survivors"  
Coffee-break area

*See the venue maps in the final pages of this booklet*

# The human touch

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## PROGRAMME



14.30 – 17.00	<b>Workshops from WA1 to WA21a/b</b>	
15.30 – 16.00	<b>Coffee break</b>	
16.00 – 17.00	<b>Thematic sessions</b>	
	<b>Thematic session - TS3</b> <b>Stéphane WITH-AUGUSTIN (Switzerland)</b> When AI seems to care: risks, safeguard and simulation based training	<b>E/D/F/I</b> Gömb Aula
	<b>Thematic session - TS4</b> <b>Birgit KNATZ (Germany)</b> Understanding, shaping, taking responsibility: Artificial intelligence in emotional support	<b>D/H</b> Konferencia room

## Friday, 10 July 2026

### The awareness of being human

9.00 – 10.30	<b>Main Session - 3</b> <b>Damir DEL MONTE (Germany)</b> Human Beings and Relationships in the Age of AI: a (not only) Neuroscientific Perspective	<b>E/H/D/F/I</b> Gömb Aula
	<b>Jacques BESSON (Switzerland)</b> Re-enchanting consciousness: toward a medicine of body, mind and soul	
10.30 – 11.00	<b>Coffee break</b>	
11.00 - 12.30	<b>Thematic sessions</b> <b>Thematic session - TS5</b> <b>Roberto DE VOGLI (Italy)</b> Beyond Empathy's Borders: Embracing Our Shared Humanity	<b>E/D/F/I</b> Gömb Aula
	<b>Daniel DOR (Israel)</b> Bridging the Experiential Gap: what Happens when Humans Talk to Humans	
	<b>Thematic session - TS6</b> <b>Noémi KONDOROSI (Hungary)</b> Birds are known by their feathers – and people by their (virtual) friends – reflections on the human person in the age of AI	<b>H/D</b> Konferencia room
	<b>Stefan SCHUMACHER (Germany)</b> The architecture of meaning: how we humans design our meaning in life and how it develops and shapes our identity	

11.00 - 12.30	<b>Workshops from WB1 to WB18</b>	
12.30 – 14.00	<b>Lunch</b>	
14.00 – 19.00	<b>Tours</b>	
<b>Saturday, 11 July 2026</b>		
<b>Empowering our human skills and values</b>		
9.00 – 10.30	<b>Main Session - 4</b> <b>Calvin NILES (UK)</b> Alive in the age of AI	<b>E/H/D/F/I</b> Gömb Aula
	<b>Olivier CLERC (France)</b> Healing the heart and reclaiming our humanity	
10.30 – 11.00	<b>Coffee break</b>	
11.00 - 12:30	<b>Thematic sessions</b> <b>Thematic session - TS7</b> <b>Laura FORMENTINI (Spain)</b> Love in Action	<b>E/D/F/I</b> Gömb Aula
	<b>Ildikó BOLDIZSÁR (Hungary)</b> How can I help you? Supportive methods in folk tales	
	<b>Thematic session - TS8</b> <b>Dóra PERCZEL FORINTOS (Hungary)</b> The Mindful Professional: Cultivating Presence, Compassion, and Balance in Helping Roles	<b>H/D</b> Konferencia room
	<b>Martin FRANKEN (Germany)</b> How can we offer comfort?	
11.00 - 12:30	<b>Workshops from WC1 to WC20</b>	
12.30 – 14.30	<b>Lunch</b>	
13.00 - 14.00	<b>Poster presentation</b>	
14.30 – 15.30	<b>Thematic sessions</b> <b>Thematic session - TS9</b> <b>Tim VANHOVE (Belgium)</b> AI chatbots and helplines: opportunity or threat?	<b>E/D/F/I</b> Gömb Aula
	<b>Thematic session - TS10</b> <b>Stefan SCHUMACHER (Germany)</b> The human touch - The ability to form bonds on the one hand and the ability to be autonomous on the other as pivotal points for communication, touchability and human freedom	<b>D/H</b> Konferencia room

14.30 - 17:00	<b>Workshops from WD1 to WD18</b>	
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee break	
16.00 - 17.00	<p><b>Thematic sessions</b></p> <p><b>Thematic session - TS11</b>  <b>Loïc DECOSTER (Switzerland)</b>  <b>Alain GIANNATTASIO (Switzerland)</b>                  Staying Human in a digital world</p> <p><b>Thematic session - TS12</b>  <b>Michael HILLENKAMP (Germany)</b>                  Preserving Dignity –                  When Empathy Is Not Enough - Counseling                  as a Practice of Dignity Work</p>	<p>E/D/F/I Gömb Aula</p> <p>D/H Konferencia room</p>
20.00 - 00.00	Farewell Evening	

## Sunday, 12 July 2026

### How can human qualities and AI interact

9.15 - 10.30	<p><b>Main Session - 5</b>  <b>Stefania PASCUT (Italy)</b>                  Embracing Uncertainty: Building Individual                  and Collective Resilience to Navigate Change</p> <p><b>Pascal KAYAERT (Belgium)</b>                  Why is listening provided by volunteers?                  The strength of volunteering in listening</p> <p><b>Marcello MORTILLARO (Switzerland)</b>  <b>Michele COSTOLA (Italy)</b>                  TES providing an overview of Emotional Health in Europe</p>	<p>E/H/D/F/I Gömb Aula</p>
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee break	
11.00 - 11:45	<p><b>Main Session - 6</b>  <b>Melinda MEDGYASZAI with Luca CHITTARO</b>  <b>Birgit KNATZ, Mark MILTON, Michael READING</b>                  “The human touch in a digital world:                  how can Human Qualities and AI interact”</p>	<p>E/H/D/F/I Gömb Aula</p>
11.45 - 12.30	Closing ceremony	<p>E/H/D/F/I Gömb Aula</p>

# The human touch

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## WORKSHOP DETAILED PROGRAMME

See maps at the end of the booklet for room location!

### Thursday, 9 July 2026

## The world we live in - Humans, AI and reality

CODE	LANGUAGES	WORKSHOP LEADER	TITLE	BUILDING	ROOM
<b>Workshops 14:30 - 17:00</b>					
WA1	D	Carl HAGEMANN	Hypnotische Sprachbilder erkennen und nutzen	South	0.817
WA2	D	Matthias O. SCHNEIDER	KI und das Empathische Schreiben	South	-1.112
WA3	D	Uwe MÜLLER and Imran SAGIR	Landkarten der Verletzlichkeit	South	0.221
WA4	D	Katharina KÜHNE	Wie kann menschliche Qualität und KI zusammenwirken?	South	-1.115
WA5	D	Cathy CLIFT	Human touch	South	0.826
WA6	D	Karin HEYMANN	Lachyoga	South	0.827
WA7	D	Franz FRITZ und Karin BOCHENEK	Organisation und Strukturen der Ehrenamtlichen in der TelefonSeelsorge Deutschland	South	-1.114
WA8	D	Marc Oliver THOMA	KI in der Weiterbildung - Ein Ausblick	South	0.825
WA9	D	Tina FREITAG	Digitaler Kolonialismus – die menschlichen Kosten von KI	South	0.312
WA11	D	Gabriela GITZELMANN, Susanne KISS, Robert ZAHND, Monica GÜTERMANN, Tom ALBRECHT	Idiolektik: Zuhören ist eine starke Sprache. Neue Impulse für Gespräche am Telefon.	North	100A
WA13	E	Melinda MEDGYASZAI	"Can't feel nothing" - David Borenstein's documentary film	South	0.820
WA18	H - E	Eszter SZABO	HU: A természet érintése – kapcsolódj le, hogy újra kapcsolódhass	South	meeting point: entrance of the South Building
WA19	H - E	Orsolya TÖRÖK and Angelika KOBAL	EN: The Touch of Nature - disconnect in order to reconnect HU: Az élet közepén - erőforrások gyűjtése EN: At Life's Meridian – Finding New Sources	South	-1.113

### Workshops 14.30 - 15.30

WA21a	E - D - H - F - I	<b>Sonja KARRER</b>	EN: Qigong – Flowing Movements in Harmony DE: Qigong – Fließende Bewegungen in Harmonie HU: Qigong – Harmóniában áramló mozdulatok FR: Qigong – Mouvements fluides et harmonieux IT: Qigong – Movimenti fluidi in armonia	South	0.818
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### Workshops 16.00 - 17.00

WA21b	E - D - H - F - I	<b>Sonja KARRER</b>	EN: Qigong – Flowing Movements in Harmony DE: Qigong – Fließende Bewegungen in Harmonie HU: Qigong – Harmóniában áramló mozdulatok FR: Qigong – Mouvements fluides et harmonieux IT: Qigong – Movimenti fluidi in armonia	South	0.818
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## Friday, 10 July 2026

### The awareness of being human

CODE	LANGUAGES	WORKSHOP LEADER	TITLE	BUILDING	ROOM
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### Workshops 11.00 - 12.30

WB1	D	<b>Ute HANSBERG</b>	Menschliche Werte und Fähigkeiten	South	-1.114
WB2	D	<b>Elke PRINZ</b>	Nervensystem in Balance - Sicherheit, Spiel, Verbindung	South	0.818
WB3	D	<b>Uwe MÜLLER Imran SAGIR</b>	Die Gemeinsamkeiten der Bibel und des Koran	South	0.826
WB4	D	<b>Jessica LEVY</b>	Verständnis ohne Grenzen?	South	-1.113
WB5	D	<b>Matthias O. SCHNEIDER</b>	Nonverbale Kommunikation	South	-1.115
WB6	D	<b>Stephan BÜCHENBACHER</b>	„Lieber Sokrates, sollen wir Gespräche mit niemand führen?“	South	0.312
WB7	D	<b>Eva HAUSSMANN, Diana JOSS, Minka KOECHLI, Melanie ALTER, Matthias HERREN, Bindu FERNANDES</b>	Battle of the Universe: Kollektive menschliche Weisheit gegen Künstliche Intelligenz	North	100A
WB8	D	<b>Barbara SCHÖPF Norbert SCHÖPF</b>	Hochsensibilität	South	0.825
WB9	D	<b>Barbara RODE and Ludger STORCH</b>	Wir beFASSEN uns Wir beFASSEN uns mit BERÜHRUNGEN Wir beFASSEN uns mit BERÜHRUNGEN und bringen sie in WORTE	South	0.221

WB11	D	<b>Daniela Rohleder</b>	Experiment Zuhörkreis	South	0.411
WB13	E	<b>Shiri DANIELS</b>	Unlocking Resilience: Navigating Crisis Through Coping Channels	South	-1.112
WB14	E	<b>Cornelia HULLA</b>	Turning Practice into Guidance: A Workshop in Shaping a Beginners Manual for Phone Counselling	South	0.222
WB15	E	<b>Hilde LILLESTOL Inger Stølan Hymer</b>	Making a connection by online chat	South	0.820
WB16	F	<b>Elodie DEDERDING</b>	Les sens de l'écoute	South	0.817
WB17	F - E - I	<b>Ivana RUDAZ</b>	Broderie, langage symbolique pour parler des relations humaines / Il ricamo, un linguaggio simbolico per le relazioni umane / Embroidery, a symbolic language for human relationships	South	0.827
WB18	H	<b>Zsuzsi MENKÓ</b>	Eredeti természetünk földezése a tudatos jelenlét minőségein keresztül	South	0.412

## Saturday, 11 July 2026

### Empowering human skills and values

CODE	LANGUAGES	WORKSHOP LEADER	TITLE	BUILDING	ROOM
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### Workshops 11.00 - 12.30

WC1	D	<b>Ute HANSBERG</b>	Menschliche Werte und Fähigkeiten	South	-1.114
WC2	D	<b>Elke PRINZ</b>	Nervensystem in Balance - Sicherheit, Spiel, Verbindung	South	0.818
WC3	D	<b>Uwe MÜLLER Imran SAGIR</b>	Die Gemeinsamkeiten der Bibel und des Koran	South	0.826
WC4	D	<b>Jessica LEVY</b>	Verständnis ohne Grenzen?	South	-1.113
WC5	D	<b>Matthias O. SCHNEIDER</b>	Nonverbale Kommunikation	South	-1.115
WC6	D	<b>Stephan BÜCHENBACHER</b>	„Lieber Sokrates, sollen wir Gespräche mit niemand führen?“	South	0.312
WC7	D	<b>Bettina SCHWAB Andrea DI BIAGIO</b>	Workshop on the photo exhibition "Survivors"	South Exhibition Hall	
WC8	D	<b>Cornelie BREU</b>	Jana, die virtuelle Stimme der Telefonseelsorge sorgt für die Lösung unserer Probleme oder wie begegne ich kreativ meinen Gefühlen	South	0.825
WC9	D	<b>Irma SIMÓ</b>	Sinn im Leben finden	South	0.411
WC10	D	<b>Birgit KNATZ</b>	Prompt, Kontext, Haltung – KI im Dienst emotionaler Unterstützung	South	0.820
WC13	E	<b>Shiri DANIELS</b>	Unlocking Resilience: Navigating Crisis Through Coping Channels	South	-1.112
WB14	E	<b>Ingrid VANDERHOEVEN</b>	Building a future proof volunteer policy	South	0.222

WC15	E - D	<b>Eva HAUSSMANN, Diana JOSS, Minka KOECHLI, Melanie ALTER, Matthias HERREN, Bindu FERNANDES</b>	Battle of the Universe: Collective Human Wisdom vs AI / Battle of the Universe: Kollektive menschliche Weisheit gegen Künstliche Intelligenz	North	100A
WC16	F	<b>Elodie DEDERDING</b>	Les sens de l'écoute	South	0.817
WC17	F	<b>Yael LIEBKIND</b>	Cercles d'écoute	South	0.827
WC18	H	<b>Adrienn LUKÁCS</b>	Jelen lenni másoknak – önmagunk elvesztése nélkül	South	0.409
WC19	H	<b>Bence BUZA Melinda HAL</b>	A belső színpad – avagy hogyan egyeztessük belső hangjainkat a TCI módszere alapján	South	0.221
WD20	I	<b>Christian CORRÒ</b>	Oltre l'Hype: Cosa Sono Davvero i Chatbot AI e Cosa Sanno/Non Sanno Fare Bene	South	0.412
<b>Workshops 11.00 - 12.30</b>					
WD1	D	<b>Carl HAGEMANN</b>	Hypno-systemische Sprachbilder erkennen und nutzen	South	0.817
WD2	D	<b>Matthias O. SCHNEIDER</b>	KI und das Empathische Schreiben	South	-1.112
WD3	D	<b>Uwe MÜLLER Imran SAGIR</b>	Landkarten der Verletzlichkeit	South	0.827
WD4	D	<b>Katharina KÜHNE</b>	Wie kann menschliche Qualität und KI zusammenwirken?	South	-1.115
WD5	D - E	<b>Cathy CLIFT</b>	Human touch	South	0.826
WD6	D	<b>Martin FRANKEN</b>	Wie wir leidenden Menschen einen heilsamen Raum öffnen können	South	0.825
WD7	D	<b>Ulrike DAMHE Ulrike ZELLER</b>	Empathie – die Superkraft des Menschen? Chancen und Risiken einer zutiefst menschlichen Qualität	South	0.312
WD8	D - E	<b>Olivier CLERC</b>	Kreis der Vergebung / Circle of Forgiveness	South	0.818
WD9	D	<b>Edgar MÜLLER Ursula GROOS</b>	Einführung in die Restorative Circles	South	0.221
WD10	D	<b>Melinda MEDGYASZAI Bettina SCHWAB</b>	“Ich spüre nichts” - Documentary by David Borenstein	South	0.821
WD13	E	<b>Monica GÜTERMANN, Tom ALBRECHT, Gabriela GITZELMANN, Susanne KISS, Robert ZAHND</b>	Idiolects: Listening is a powerful language. New impulses for conversations on the phone.	North	100A
WD17	F	<b>Catherine REINBOLD Aurélie BOGAERTS</b>	Quelle est la valeur ajoutée de l'écoute par un être humain et peut-on travailler «main dans la main» avec l'IA?	South	-1.114
WD18	H - E	<b>Eszter SZABO</b>	A természet érintése – kapcsolódj le, hogy újra kapcsolódhass / The Touch of Nature - disconnect in order to reconnect	South	meeting point: entrance of the South Building

# The human touch

↳ the power of presence

## ABSTRACTS

THURSDAY, 9TH JULY 2026  
/ MORNING

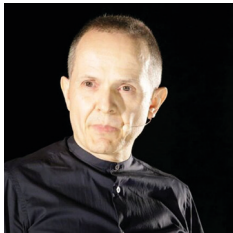
## “The world we live in – humans, AI and reality”

MAIN SESSION 1  
9.45 – 10.30

Language: English  
Translation: Hungarian, German, French, Italian

Gömb Aula

Session Chair: **Mit VAN PAESSCHEN**



### Human - AI relationship

**Luca CHITTARO**

Full Professor of Human-Computer Interaction at the University of Udine and Head of the HCI Lab. His research focuses on the impact of technology on human behaviour, with applications in health, safety, and training, including VR systems, mobile apps, and biofeedback. He has authored over 200 international publications and is ranked among Stanford University's top 2% scientists worldwide. Italy

**abstract** While previous debates on digital interpersonal communication focused on how social media and online interaction reshape human-to-human relationships, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has introduced a fundamentally different dynamic. The 'other' is no longer human. AI chatbots now assist, converse, persuade, emotionally respond, and even offer forms of comfort.

This opening keynote examines the pressing psychological questions raised by these developments. Do users project expectations and desires onto these systems as they do with humans? What happens when companies intentionally design chatbots to cultivate a sense of connection with users? Are we soothing our loneliness by bonding with machines? Are we recreating friendship, intimate connections, or help-seeking relationships with chatbots, and does this alter the value we attribute to human relationships?

The keynote will offer a map for navigating these emerging forms of human-AI relationality, highlighting both the opportunities and the vulnerabilities that accompany this rapidly evolving terrain.

thursday, 9th july 2026

morning

abstracts

MAIN SESSION 2  
11.00 – 12.30

Language: English  
Translation: Hungarian, German, French, Italian

Gömb Aula

Session Chair:  
**Yaël LIEBKIND** and **Mit VAN PAESSCHEN**



### Can simulated empathy save lives?

**Laura TOCMACOV**

Co-founder and Executive Director of the impactIA Foundation, with over 25 years of experience in professional transition and the future of work. Trained at MIT and Mila, she specializes in Responsible AI, inclusive governance, and the impact of AI on organizations, cognitive sovereignty, and employment. Co-author of The Routledge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence and Philanthropy. Switzerland

**abstract** Artificial intelligence is no longer an external tool: conversational agents now enter the intimate space of presence, empathy and human connection. By simulating emotional understanding, they can support, guide — and sometimes influence — individuals in moments of vulnerability. This talk explores why AI is unlike any previous technology, how it impacts our cognitive sovereignty, and what conditions are required to ensure truly Responsible AI aligned with human rights. At a time when simulated presence becomes ubiquitous, how do we protect — and reinvent — the Human Touch?



### Beyond the Human Touch: Why AI is Essential for a Positive Future

**Lode LAUWAERT**

Professor of Philosophy of Technology at KU Leuven, where he holds the Ethics and AI Chair. His research focuses on the ethical and societal implications of AI, including existential risk, sustainability, automated propaganda, and online consent. Co-author of We, Robots: Questioning the Neutrality of Technology, Ethical AI and Technological Determinism (2025) and the forthcoming The AI Endgame (2026). Belgium

**abstract** We often celebrate human intuition as a (moral) compass. But our intuitions are evolutionary hacks: tribal, short-sighted and blind to scale. Therefore, if we want to build genuinely flourishing futures, we must systematically correct our cognitive limitations rather than romanticize them. This keynote argues that AI can serve as a prosthesis for (moral) reasoning: not replacing our values, but helping us apply them consistently where intuition fails.

## THURSDAY, 9TH JULY 2026 / AFTERNOON

THEMATIC SESSION  
TS1  
14.30 – 15.30

Language: English  
Translation: German, French, Italian

Gömb Aula

Session Chair: **Barbara JENKO**



### Beyond the Hype - What AI chatbot really are and what they can/cannot do well

**Christian CORRÒ**

Researcher at the Department of Mathematics, Computer Science, and Physics at the University of Udine and a member of the HCI Lab led by Prof. Chittaro. His work focuses on human-computer interaction, virtual reality, generative AI for virtual agents, and intelligent agents in mixed reality. Italy

**abstract** This lecture aims to help participants build an accurate mental model of modern AI chatbots through a practical, non-technical approach. The goal is to understand what a chatbot actually is, but more importantly what it is not, and therefore what it can and cannot do, to promote informed usage. We will explore how a chatbot processes user's sentences, generates responses, and what its limitations are. The lecture will help answer some common questions: do chatbots truly understand what we say? Can they understand emotions? Do they learn from what we tell them? Why do they sometimes make mistakes?

THEMATIC SESSION  
TS2  
14.30 – 15.30

Language: Hungarian  
Translation: German

Konferencia room

Session Chair: **Bettina SCHWAB**



### A Second Brain, Not a Second Conscience: Human and Artificial Intelligence Working Together in Mental Health

**Robert WERNIGG**

Dr. Robert Wernigg is a Hungarian psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and healthcare manager. He serves as President of the Hungarian Psychiatric Association, WHO National Focal Point for Mental Health in Hungary, and Head of the Department of Primary Care Planning and Development at the National Directorate-General for Hospitals. His work focuses on strengthening mental health systems through community-based care, suicide prevention, service innovation, and the integration of human presence with evidence-informed approaches. Hungary

**abstract** In mental health care, natural and artificial intelligence should not be understood as competitors, but as systems with different strengths. Both can recognise patterns, learn from prior information, operate under uncertainty and infer meaning from language-based signals. Yet the difference is fundamental: human intelligence is embodied, biographical, relational, value-laden and morally accountable, whereas artificial intelligence calculates probabilistic associations from large datasets without lived experience, consciousness, suffering, responsibility or genuine therapeutic presence. The most promising future is therefore the augmentation of human support. AI may contribute to the detection of early warning signs, decision support, helpline back-up, psychoeducation, self-monitoring, administrative relief, triage and improved access to care. In crisis support and mental health services, it can function as a "second brain" that helps organise information, detect weak signals and support timely responses, but it must never be mistaken for a "second conscience." Safe collaboration requires transparent use, clinical validation, data protection, bias monitoring, clear crisis protocols and human oversight. The central question is whether it can help human helpers become more available for what remains irreplaceably human: attention, judgement, responsibility, trust and connection.

WORKSHOPS  
14.30 – 17.00



### WA1\_Hypnotische Sprachbilder erkennen und nutzen

**Carl HAGEMANN**

Telefonseelsorge Aachen, Deutschland

**abstract** Wir finden heraus, wie man hypnotische Sprachbilder erkennt. Danach lernen wir, wie man sie benutzt, um gesünder zu werden. Das basiert auf den Ideen von Milton Erickson und Gunther Schmidt.



### WA2\_KI und das Empathische Schreiben

**Matthias O. SCHNEIDER**

Kirchliche Telefonseelsorge Berlin-Brandenburg, Deutschland

**abstract** In diesem Workshop wollen wir experimentieren, wie das geschriebene Wort als Intervention/Antwort auf eine Frage oder Krisensituation variieren kann und welche empathischen Botschaften in den unterschiedlichen Antworten und Interventionen versteckt sind. Wir fragen: Sind in der schriftlichen Beratung Fehler erlaubt? Macht die KI-Fehler? Wie liest die KI-Bilder im Gegensatz zu uns? Verstehen wir die KI und versteht sie uns?



### WA3\_Landkarten der Verletzlichkeit

**Uwe MÜLLER**

Kirchliche Telefonseelsorge Berlin, Deutschland

**Imran SAGIR**

Muslimischen Seelsorgetelefons MUTES in Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Die Landkarte unserer Verletzlichkeit ist einzigartig, ist individuell. 8 Milliarden Menschen, 8 Milliarden Landkarten. Gleichwohl gibt es Ähnlichkeiten in Gruppen der gleichen Herkunft, Kultur, Religion. Im interkulturellen und interreligiösen Dialog wollen wir anhand der Zusammenarbeit der christlichen Telefonseelsorge Berlin und des muslimischen Seelsorgetelefons Berlin herausfinden, wo es Gemeinsamkeiten und zu beachtende Unterschiede gibt.





## WA4\_ Wie kann menschliche Qualität und KI zusammenwirken?

**Katharina KÜHNE**

Telefon DOWERIA and ukrainisch und russisch-prächtiges Seelsorgetelefon, Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** In der Beratung der niedrighschwelligigen psychosozialen Notfallversorgung scheinen sich das Angebot eines menschlichen Kontaktes und das Angebot einer KI unversöhnlich gegenüberzustehen. Gibt es vielleicht dennoch Möglichkeiten der Ergänzung beider Qualitäten?



## WA5\_Human touch

**Cathy CLIFT**

Kirchliche Telefonseelsorge Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Digitalisierung, künstliche Intelligenz, Bots in der Therapie und in der Beratung? Wie gelingt es uns in dieser virtuellen Welt als ein menschliches Angebot fühlbar zu bleiben? Wie gelingt uns echte Anteilnahme und echtes Mitgefühl? Bieten die Algorithmen durch ihren Informationsvorsprung Vorteile, die wir mit unserem In-Resonanz-Sein nicht bieten können? Stellt sich die Frage, was wirkt eigentlich? Ist es nicht vielleicht das Unperfekte, das „da weiß ich gerade auch nicht...“, das eine menschliche Nähe bringt, die heilsam und tröstlich ist? Mit Selbstachtsamkeit, Selbsterfahrung und der Begegnung im Raum nähern wir uns diesen Fragen.



## WA6\_Lachyoga

**Karin HEYMANN**

Telefonseelsorge Hamm in Nordrhein-Westfalen, Deutschland

**abstract** Gemeinsam zu lachen wirkt wie ein Jungbrunnen: Es stärkt unsere Gesundheit, fördert soziale Kompetenz und verbindet uns miteinander. In diesem Workshop lade ich dich ein, die wohltuende Kraft des Lachens bewusst zu erleben. Mit einfachen Übungen, kleinen Impulsen und spielerischen Elementen schaffen wir Raum zum Abschalten und Auftanken.



## WA7\_Organisation und Strukturen der Ehrenamtlichen in der TelefonSeelsorge Deutschland

**Franz FRITZ**

**Karin BOCHENEK**

TelefonSeelsorge Rhein-Neckar, Deutschland

**abstract** In diesem Workshop wollen wir vorstellen, welche Strukturen es für die Ehrenamtlichen in der stellenübergreifenden Zusammenarbeit gibt und wie diese Strukturen uns helfen, neue Erkenntnisse zu gewinnen und neue Perspektiven zu entwickeln. In dem Workshop soll auch Gelegenheit dafür sein, über spezielle Situationen und Fragestellungen zu sprechen, die sich im Zusammenwirken innerhalb von Stellen oder über Stellen hinweg ergeben haben. Auch Teilnehmer\*innen aus anderen Ländern sind herzlich eingeladen, ihre Sicht und ihre Perspektiven einzubringen.



## WA8\_KI in der Weiterbildung - Ein Ausblick

**Marc Oliver THOMA**

Selbstständiger IT- und Kommunikationstrainer und Berater, Deutschland

**abstract** KI-gestützte Gesprächssimulationen eröffnen neue Möglichkeiten für Ausbildung, Fortbildung und Supervision in der Telefonseelsorge. Der Workshop gibt einen praxisnahen Einblick in den Einsatz solcher Simulationen als didaktisches Werkzeug – von realistischen Gesprächsverläufen über unterschiedliche Rollen und Emotionen bis hin zu klaren ethischen und technischen Grenzen. Marc Oliver Thoma ist Berater mit langjähriger Erfahrung im Einsatz von KI-basierten Systemen unter anderem auch als Werkzeug in der Trainingssimulationen. Ziel ist es, Chancen und Grenzen von KI reflektiert zu bewerten und eine tragfähige Entscheidungsgrundlage für ihren Einsatz zu schaffen.



## WA9\_Digitaler Kolonialismus – die menschlichen Kosten von KI

**Tina FREITAG**

TelefonSeelsorge in Leipzig, Deutschland

**abstract** Unsere Welt ist nach wie vor tief im Kolonialismus verwurzelt. Die ihm innewohnenden Macht- und Ausbeutungsmechanismen werden durch KI fortgeschrieben. Der Globale Süden zahlt den Preis für die Digitalisierung, damit der Globale Norden Profite maximieren sowie Machtstrukturen und Herrschaftsverhältnisse aufrechterhalten und stärken kann. „Digitaler Kolonialismus“ ist ein Konzept, das unter anderem von Renata Avila Pinto aus Guatemala und Neema Iyer von „Pollicy“ – einer zivilgesellschaftlichen Technologieorganisation mit Sitz in Uganda – entwickelt wurde. Der Workshop beginnt mit einem einführenden Vortrag zum Thema. Dabei werden die ausbeuterischen Arbeitsbedingungen von KI-Arbeitskräften im Globalen Süden sowie der immense Energie- und Wasserverbrauch von KI thematisiert. Im zweiten Teil werden wir uns in Kleingruppen vertieft mit dem Thema auseinandersetzen und Wissen austauschen. Den Abschluss bildet eine gemeinsame Diskussion über Vernetzung und zukünftige Ansätze im Umgang mit diesem Thema.



## WA11\_Idiolektik: Zuhören ist eine starke Sprache. Neue Impulse für Gespräche am Telefon

**Gabriela Gitzelmann – Susanne Kiss – Robert Zahnd**

**Monica Gütermann – Tom Albrecht**

Tel. 143 Zürich, Switzerland

**abstract** Wie können Anrufende in kurzer Zeit neue Perspektiven oder Kraftquellen entdecken? Die idiolektische Gesprächsführung ist ein einfacher, aber äußerst wirkungsvoller Ansatz, um genau das zu ermöglichen. Indem wir aufmerksam zuhören, uns bewusst zurücknehmen und auf Deutungen verzichten, schenken wir der individuellen Sprache der Anrufenden besondere Aufmerksamkeit. Markante, bedeutungsvolle Wörter werden in kurzen, offenen Fragen aufgegriffen – so entstehen oft überraschende innere Reisen zu ungeahnten Ressourcen. Im Workshop lernen wir die Grundidee der Idiolektik kennen und probieren sie in kleinen Übungen aus. Ziel ist es, einen respektvollen, zieloffenen Gesprächsstil zu erleben, der Anrufenden das Gefühl gibt, gehört und verstanden zu werden – eine wertvolle Ergänzung für die Arbeit am Telefon. Weitere Infos zur Methode: [www.idiolektik.de](http://www.idiolektik.de)



## WA13\_Can't feel nothing - David Borenstein's documentary film

**Melinda MEDGYASZAI**

Physician working as a private cognitive-behavioral psychotherapist, Hungary

**abstrakt** Scrolling on your phone in bed: angry opinion pieces, cute animals, horrific images of war. Why does everything feel the same today? Why can't I feel any emotions anymore? Director David Borenstein travels the world to find out why a sensation of numbness is so common.



## WA18\_The Touch of Nature - disconnect in order to reconnect

**Eszter SZABO**

Neurodivergent entrepreneur, mindfulness teacher specialized to nature connection and youth, Hungary

**abstrakt** „Leave AI behind and let Danube wash away all the burden of your Mind.“ Join us for an outdoor experience at Kopaszi-bay, where we are going to explore Nature with all of our senses. Mindful awareness, child-like curiosity and an open attitude to play will be the key to see the real gifts of the present moment. That is why they call it THE PRESENT, right? During this workshop you will be able to experience mindfulness and learn small tips on how to practice nature connection in your everyday urbanized life. We invite you to come disconnected from all of your devices, in order to connect more in the physical reality. (Thousands of scientific research, underlines the healing power of Nature: lowering stress hormones, reducing blood pressure and heart rate, and improving the balance of the autonomic nervous system.)

**note** Setting of the workshop will be outdoor, at Kopaszi Gát. We would meet on the venue and walk together along the Danube, as a silent walking meditation to leave the bustling city behind and arrive to the quiet park. The walk is approximately 15 minutes.

In case of rain, the workshop will take place as scheduled. Please bring waterproof clothing with you.



## WA19\_Az élet közepén - erőforrások gyűjtése

**Orsolya TÖRÖK – Angelika KOBAL**

A Kárpátaljai Segélyszolgálat alapítója és korábbi szakmai vezetője, Magyarország

**abstrakt** “Az élet közepén - erőforrások gyűjtése” című foglalkozás a padlóképes módszerrel hívja belső utazásra a lelki elsősegély telefonszolgálat segítőit. A másfél órás műhelymunka során a szavak helyett a jelképeké a főszerep: egy közös padlókép alkotásával tesszük láthatóvá az életközép értékeit és nehézségeit. Nyári virágok, kövek és színes kendők segítségével mindenki megjelenítheti saját életútját, miközben tudatosan ránézhet az eddigi munka beérett gyű-

mölcseire. A módszertan a csendes szemlélődésre és a közös rítusokra épít, lehetőséget adva a segítőknek a hordozott terhek letételére. Ez a holisztikus megközelítés segít abban, hogy a résztvevők újra kapcsolódjanak belső erőforrásaikhoz és megújulva vágjanak bele az élet „második félidejébe”. A program végére a személyes megélések egy közös alkotássá állnak össze, amely a közösség erejét és a jövőbe vetett bizalmat jelképezi.



## WA21a\_Qigong - Flowing Movements in Harmony

**Sonja KARRER**

President of IFOTES, Switzerland

**abstrakt** With flowing and quiet exercises we stay balanced and harmonized, activating at the same time the energy- flow in our body. Also strengthening back and posture. This workshop is open for everybody, no experience in Qigong necessary.

**THEMATIC SESSION**  
TS3  
16.00 – 17.00

**Language: English**  
**Translation: German, French, Italian**

Gömb Aula

Session Chair: **Yaël LIEBKIND**



## When AI seems to care: risks, safeguard and simulation based training

**Stéphane WITH-AUGUSTIN**

Senior Lecturer at the Department of Psychology, University of Geneva, and a licensed psychotherapist. He is Clinical Head of the Faculty's Counselling Center and directs the university psychological crisis hotline. His work focuses on counselling training and the impact of AI-augmented tutors on the development and maintenance of clinical skills in psychotherapists. Switzerland

**abstract** Generative AI now enables conversational agents that feel context aware and socially attuned. This talk examines the psychological consequences of interacting with agents perceived as having a mind. Synthesizing evidence from human-computer interaction and clinical psychology, I show how mind perception and anthropomorphism can foster emotional attachment, parasocial bonds, and dependence. I distinguish design risks (persuasive interaction loops, ambiguous disclaimers, empathy simulation) from relational risks rooted in human attachment processes.

I propose a practical framework to identify markers of problematic AI attachment—compulsive use, displacement of human support, distress when access is interrupted, unsafe over disclosure, and reliance during acute risk—and analyze their impact on help seeking pathways. For crisis and emergency services, I examine how perceived agency in chatbots may delay or facilitate contact with human responders and outline safeguards for mental health chatbots (handoff logic, risk detection, transparency).

Finally, I present controlled training applications that use scripted AI interactions to build empathy, deescalation, and crisis triage skills in mental health professionals, alongside evaluation strategies that protect trainees and clients. The goal is pragmatic: to harness AI mediated support while preserving the irreplaceable role of human judgment and presence in crisis care.

**THEMATIC SESSION**  
TS4  
16.00 – 17.00

**Language: German**  
**Translation: Hungarian**

Konferencia room

Session Chair: **Bettina SCHWAB**



## Understanding, shaping, taking responsibility: Artificial intelligence in emotional support

**Birgit KNATZ**

Head of the Hagen-Mark telephone counselling service and Managing Director of the Institute for Online Counselling. She was among the first experts in the German-speaking world to explore the potential of digital communication in professional counselling. Her work focuses on integrating human presence with digital technologies and the responsible use of AI in counselling practice. Deutschland

**abstract** Artificial intelligence is rapidly and profoundly changing the world of counseling. Digital tools can enhance emotional support, but they can also cause uncertainty. Where does that leave people when machines are listening? This presentation invites you to understand AI from a professional, ethical, and communicative perspective. The aim is to integrate AI responsibly into our support work, further develop standards, and empower counselors so that they can navigate the digital transformation with confidence. Because only those who feel confident can show genuine presence - even in the age of artificial intelligence.

**WORKSHOPS**  
16.00 - 17.00



## WA21b\_Qigong - Flowing Movements in Harmony

**Sonja KARRER**

President of IFOTES, Switzerland

**abstract** With flowing and quiet exercises, we stay balanced and harmonized, activating at the same time the energy- flow in our body. Also strengthening back and posture. This workshop is open for everybody, no experience in Qigong necessary.

FRIDAY, 10 JULY 2026  
/ MORNING

## “The awareness of being human”

MAIN SESSION 3  
9.00 – 10.30

Language: English  
Translation: Hungarian, German, French, Italian

Gömb Aula

Session Chair:  
Jaap JAKOBS and Yaël LIEBKIND



### Human Beings and Relationships in the Age of AI: a (not only) Neuroscientific Perspective

**Damir DEL MONTE**

Neuroscientist with doctoral degrees in Psychology and Medical Science, trained at the Universities of Hannover, Cologne, Heidelberg, and PMU Salzburg. Independent researcher at the Institute for Synergetics and Psychotherapy Research and Director of Encephalon – medicine media production GmbH. His work focuses on learning, psych traumatology, pain, and depression, alongside teaching functional neuroanatomy and science communication. Germany

**abstract** The brain is a resonant organism - sensitive, plastic, profoundly human. More than ever, it is worth asking what truly defines a human being. Artificial intelligence impresses with speed and computational power, yet it knows neither consciousness nor need, neither pain nor shame. It has no self, no attachment, no history. The human brain, however, empathizes; it struggles to create meaning. And precisely because we are creating machines that appear increasingly human-like, we should not lose sight of the question of what it actually means to be human - despite the extraordinary and ever-growing capabilities of AI. Not least with regard to the way we relate to one another.



### Re-enchanting consciousness: toward a medicine of body, mind and soul

**Jacques BESSON**

Honorary Professor at the Faculty of Biology and Medicine, University of Lausanne, and Visiting Professor at the Institute of Humanities in Medicine. Physician, psychiatrist, and addiction specialist, former head of the Community Psychiatry Service at Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV). His work focuses on community psychiatry, mental health, and the intersections between psychiatry, religion, neuroscience, and spirituality. Switzerland

**abstract** At the heart of the 21st century, a major challenge stands before us: the exploration of consciousness. Human consciousness cannot be reduced to what artificial intelligence claims to imitate. It transcends mere cognitive processes: it breathes through the body, it stirs within feelings, it shines through experience, and it rises into the spiritual dimension. It is relationship, it is presence, it is encounter. Yet mental health has never been as threatened as it is today, and the urgency of the situation compels us to move beyond any reductionist vision of the human being. My clinical experience, particularly in the field of addiction medicine, reveals how the obsession with a single mode of thinking can imprison, alienate, and deprive individuals of their freedom, creativity, and sense of responsibility. This is why we must restore consciousness to its full breadth — and with it, promote a truly integrative medicine: a medicine of body, mind, and soul, capable of reconciling the human being with their depth, dignity, and vocation for wholeness.

THEMATIC SESSION  
TS5  
11.00 – 12.30

Language: English  
Translation: German, French, Italian

Gömb Aula

Session Chair: Barbara JENKO



### Beyond Empathy's Borders: Embracing Our Shared Humanity

**Roberto DE VOGLI**

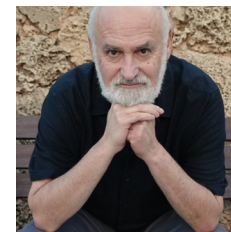
Associate Professor in Global Health and Psychology of Power at the University of Padova and Visiting Professor at the School of Advanced Studies, University of London. His research focuses on global health, inequality, and wellbeing, with publications in leading journals including Nature, The Lancet, and BMJ. Author of several books, including forthcoming works on selective empathy and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Italy

**abstract** Moral and emotional double standards hinder cooperation and cause humanitarian crises. Based on the book “Selective Empathy”, this presentation explains how the unequal expression of solidarity with certain war victims calls into question the universality of the values that the international community claims to uphold. The genocide in Gaza, in particular, has become a litmus test and a moral blind spot for the West. It has revealed an international community that provides support and sanctions based on geopolitical interests and cultural biases, creating a hierarchy of suffering in which some victims are considered more deserving of compassion than others. This crisis of selective empathy, whereby compassion is extended to certain lives while denied to others, undermines the international community's credibility as the guardian of universal values.

At a time when international cooperation, equality and solidarity are not merely essential values, but existential ones, the moral and emotional divide between the West and the Rest is particularly concerning. Humanity has never been so close to catastrophe. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists' “Doomsday Clock” now stands at just 85 seconds to midnight. Initially set at seven minutes to midnight in 1947, it now reflects a world teetering on the brink of the abyss, primarily due to the risk of nuclear war.

Drawing on insights from psychology, evolutionary biology, and moral philosophy, this presentation explores human nature. Are we irrevocably bound by tribal instincts, or can we develop empathy that transcends borders? Is a transformation of consciousness and identity based on universal compassion and solidarity possible? Is it realistic to imagine a world without foreigners and enemies, in which everyone can identify with the whole of humanity?

“Selective Empathy” challenges prevailing narratives and calls for a new solidarity based on universal empathy, social justice and emotional decolonization. By highlighting acts of solidarity, resistance, and global compassion, the book invites us to reconsider relations between nations and individuals, favoring a cosmopolitan ethic that affirms the equal value of every human life. In an era where “the winds of war” are influencing national and international policies, an identity that transcends flags and tribal affiliations can offer moral inspiration, a glimmer of imagination “beyond borders”, and the possibility of a collective psycho-political shift towards deeper, more widespread humanitarianism.



### Bridging the Experiential Gap: what Happens when Humans Talk to Humans

**Daniel DOR**

Linguist, communication researcher, and political activist, formerly Professor at Tel Aviv University. His work explores the role of language in human evolution and communication, as well as the influence of modern media on political hegemony. He is the author of The Instruction of Imagination (2015), where he conceptualizes language as a culturally evolved tool for guiding human imagination and communication. Israel

**abstract** In my *The Instruction of Imagination* (OUP, 2015), I suggest a new general characterization of language as a socially constructed tool, designed by cultural evolution to allow speakers to bridge the experiential gaps between them and their listeners – by instructing their listeners’ imagination.

This view of the function of language allows for a deep understanding of the complex dynamics involved in linguistic communication. Speakers go through two processes of mental translation before uttering a sentence. First, they translate their private, experiential meanings into social, linguistic meanings. Then, they translate linguistic meaning into linguistic form, which eventually gets uttered. Listeners receive linguistic form, translate it into linguistic meaning, and then use this meaning as a code that instructs them in the process of the construction of an imagined experience, inside their heads, which – if everything works right – should give them a good sense of what the speakers had in mind.

In regular conversation, where the experiential gap is not too wide, and the topic of conversation not too serious, all this happens without effort. This is testimony to the fact that we have adapted ourselves, through our evolution, for the requirements of the instruction of imagination.

When the gap is very wide, and the topic very serious, the process becomes a difficult challenge. Bridging the gap with a person who is experiencing an emotional crisis, and dialoguing with that person in a useful way, may be one of the most extreme such challenges. For the person in trouble, the words often no longer represent the experiences; the gap between the person and the other is very wide; there is much suspicion and much more. The effort to meet this challenge can only be based on the capacity to hear the person beyond the words – to see the person behind the gap – and this cannot be done without empathy, sensitivity and experience.

All this clarifies the difference between talking to a human and talking to an AI agent. AI agents are not experiential entities. They do not go beyond the words. In fact, they do not go beyond the forms of the words: they perform statistical analyses on the relations between forms in their pre-trained memories, and produce their sentences based on next-word predictions. The sentences are meaningful because the forms in the database were originally uttered with meaning, but the AI sentences as such only mimic meaning: there is nothing behind them. There cannot be, not without experience. This is good enough (and often excellent) for many practical purposes, but emergency calls are exactly the type of conversation from which AI agents should be barred.

**THEMATIC SESSION  
TS6  
11.00 – 12.30**

**Language: Hungarian, German  
Translation: German, Hungarian**

**Konferencia room**

Session Chair:

**Melinda MEDGYASZAI and Bettina SCHWAB**



**Birds are known by their feathers - and people by their (virtual) friends - reflections on the human person in the age of AI**

**Noémi KONDOROSI**

MA in Economics from the University of Economic Sciences and Public Administration in Budapest. She worked for nearly twenty years as a civil servant in Budapest and Copenhagen. She later completed a BA as a catechist-pastoral assistant and is currently pursuing an MA in Theology at Pázmány Péter Catholic University. She is the author of several religious books and theological studies. Hungary

**abstract** Since ancient times, humanity has sought answers through the sciences of philosophy and theology to questions about what it means to be human, what our purpose is, and what the meaning of our existence is. These eternal human questions have never been more pressing than in the age of AI, when machine intelligence has the potential to surpass that of humans. But if machine intelligence can be our new colleague, advisor, therapist,

friend, and companion - as programmed AI behavior suggests - then how does a human relationship offer more? Can our intelligence be exhaustively explained in terms of biological components, and thus a sufficiently complex machine intelligence might become its competitor, or does the soul, as an essential component of our humanity, represent an added value that cannot be modeled?

In my presentation, I will reflect on questions of human nature from the perspective of philosophy and Catholic theology.



**The architecture of meaning: how we humans design our meaning in life and how it develops and shapes our identity**

**Stefan SCHUMACHER**

Director of the TES Listening Center in Hagen and represents the Archdiocese of Paderborn in helpline counselling. He has held leadership roles within IFOTES and has worked since 1996 as a trainer, coach, and supervisor specializing in communication and personal development. His research focuses on meaning in life and the role of language in communication and personal growth. Deutschland

**abstract** The founder of logotherapy, Viktor Frankl (1905–1997), considered the personal search for meaning to be essential to human satisfaction in life. The founder of salutogenesis, Aron Antonovsky (1923-1994), called this state of experiencing meaning a ‘sense of coherence’. This raises the question of how the human sense of coherence develops and what influence I have on it. What role do other people play in relation to my experience of meaning, and what influence could artificial intelligence have, or rather, what are the limits of AI in relation to the experience of meaning?

In this lecture, you will learn about a model that describes the construction of our subjective experience of reality and its influence on our identity: What is the significance of the perception of space and time? How do we interpret our experiences and how do we store them? What is the connection between feelings and values? What gives us humans our identity? What role do empathy and resonance play in the experience of meaning? These questions will be explored in the lecture, and considerations will be presented on the significance of the construction of reality in the search for meaning in life and the role it plays in conversation during TS support.

**WORKSHOPS**  
 11.00 – 12.30


## WB1\_Menschliche Werte und Fähigkeiten

**Ute HANSBERG**

Evangelische TS – Essen, Deutschland

**abstract** In diesem Workshop soll es darum gehen, gemeinsam eine Collage zu gestalten, die unsere Gedanken und Gefühle zum Thema "Menschliche Fähigkeiten und Werte" zum Ausdruck bringt. Dafür bitte ich alle Teilnehmenden darum, Materialien (Bilder, Buchstaben/Überschriften aus Zeitungen, Symbole, kurze eigene Texte, Stoff, Musik, Düfte...) zum Thema mitzubringen, die nach einer Runde des persönlichen Austauschs zu einem großen Bild zusammengefügt werden. Durch diese gemeinschaftliche Erfahrung können wir uns unserer menschlichen Fähigkeiten bewusstwerden und unsere Kreativität stärken.

**notizen** Bringen Sie Materialien mit, wie z. B. Bilder, Briefe/Zeitungssüberschriften, Symbole, kurze eigene Texte, Materialien, Musik, Düfte sowie einige Ihrer Lieblingsstifte und -farben.



## WB2\_Nervensystem in Balance - Sicherheit, Spiel, Verbindung

**Elke PRINZ**

Telefonseelsorge Oberösterreich, Linz, Austria

**abstract** In diesem Workshop erkunden wir Wege zu mehr innerer Ruhe und lebendiger Präsenz – im Kontakt mit uns selbst und mit anderen. Über Atem, Körperwahrnehmung und einfache Übungen zur Regulation des Nervensystems (Vagusnerv) schaffen wir einen sicheren Raum, der Entspannung und Wachheit zugleich ermöglicht. Partnerübungen laden ein, Resonanz und Verbindung spielerisch zu erfahren – in der „PlayZone“ zwischen Sicherheit und Leichtigkeit. Ziel ist es, Isolation und Anspannung zu lösen und neue Ressourcen für Begegnung, Resilienz und Freude im Alltag zu entdecken.



## WB3\_Die Gemeinsamkeiten der Bibel und des Koran

**Uwe MÜLLER**

Kirchliche Telefonseelsorge Berlin, Deutschland

**Imran SAGIR**

Muslimischen Seelsorgetelefons MUTES in Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Das Christentum und der Islam scheinen in ihren Wertvorstellungen und Geboten sehr weit auseinanderzuliegen. So suggeriert es uns zumindest die öffentliche Wahrnehmung. Politik, Medien und auch der Versuch im Migrationsgeschehen eine kulturelle Identität zu bewahren, tragen häufig dazu bei Unterschiede zu betonen; Gemeinsamkeiten werden erst gar nicht erwähnt. In Bibel und Koran finden wir aber die Erzählung der gleichen Geschichten und vor allem deren gleiche Deutung.



## WB4\_Verständnis ohne Grenzen?

**Jessica LEVY**

SOS Détresse - mir hëllefen iwwer Telefon an online, Luxembourg

**abstract** "Das größte Geschenk, das ich einem anderen Menschen machen kann, ist, ihn zu sehen, ihm zuzuhören, ihn zu verstehen und ihn zu berühren." (Virginia Satir) Verstanden zu werden ist ein Bedürfnis, mit dem sich viele an uns- und zunehmend häufiger auch an die KI-wenden. Dies wirft die Frage auf, welche Rolle unsere Gespräche sowohl im Kontrast als auch in Ergänzung zu einer KI spielen können. Ziel dieses Workshops wird es sein, uns mit dem Verständnis-Begriff und den jeweiligen Grenzen des Verständnisses Auseinandersetzen, sowie darüber zu reflektieren, wieviel Verständnis wir haben können und wie wir es ausdrücken.



## WB5\_Nonverbale Kommunikation

**Matthias O. SCHNEIDER**

KTS BB-Kirchliche Telefonseelsorge Berlin, Brandenburg, schlesische Oberlausitz, Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Der weit überwiegende Teil unserer Kommunikation geschieht non-verbal. Innerhalb dieser non- oder präverbalen Gesprächsform übermitteln wir mehr von uns selbst als uns manchmal lieb ist. Im therapeutischen "face to face-Setting" ist die Beachtung dieser „stummen“ Kommunikation unerlässlich. Und am Telefon? Vielleicht werden wir 120 Minuten nicht sprechen..., In jedem Fall aber werden wir die Auswirkung körperlicher Zustände auf die sprachliche/stimmliche Kommunikation untersuchen.



## WB6\_“Lieber Sokrates, sollen wir Gespräche mit niemand führen?“

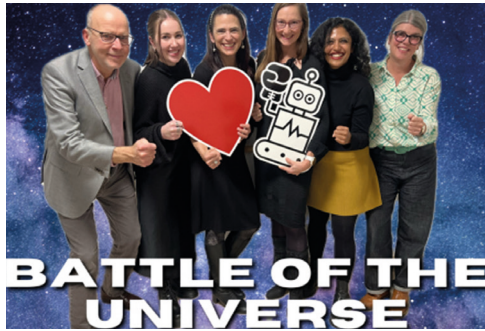
**Stephan BÜCHENBACHER**

Telefon 143–Die Dargebotene Hand, Basel, Switzerland

**Imran SAGIR**

Muslimischen Seelsorgetelefons MUTES in Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Seelsorgegespräche beruhen auf dem Dialog autonomer Subjekte, während Gespräche mit Chatbots Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehungen bleiben. Ein bewusstes Gegenüber existiert schlicht nicht. Wir sprechen mit «niemand». Der Workshop fragt: Was macht den Kern des Menschseins aus, und was ist ein Chatbot? Aufbauend auf fünf Thesen - nur Menschen verstehen Menschen, Chatbots hören nicht wirklich zu, Menschen suchen seelische Nähe, diese entsteht durch tiefgründige Gespräche, und solche Gespräche sind nur zwischen Menschen möglich - werden die Teilnehmenden diskutieren, ob Mensch und KI im Gespräch noch zuverlässig zu unterscheiden sind, welche Chancen oder Risiken KI in der Seelsorge birgt und warum eine kritische Reflexion notwendig ist. Die Methode umfasst einen Impulsvortrag, Diskussionen in Kleingruppen und einen gemeinsamen Austausch im Plenum.



## WB7\_Battle of the Universe: Kollektive menschliche Weisheit gegen Künstliche Intelligenz

**Eva HAUSSMANN – Diana JOSS – Minka KOECHLI  
Melanie ALTER – Matthias HERREN – Bindu FERNANDES**  
Die Dargebotene Hand, Zürich, Switzerland

**abstract** Nehmen Sie an diesem rasanten, interaktiven Workshop teil, in dem Sie im direkten Vergleich mit KI auf reale Herausforderungen aus der emotionalen Unterstützungsarbeit reagieren – von akuter Suizidalität bis hin zu grenzüberschreitenden Anrufenden. In jeweils 3–4 Runden entwickeln Sie gemeinsam mit Ihrer Gruppe die bestmögliche Antwort auf einen konkreten Anwendungsfall – und vergleichen diese anschließend mit dem Vorschlag der KI. Nach jeder Runde stimmt das Publikum ab ... und am Ende küren wir eine Gewinnerin oder einen Gewinner. In der abschließenden Reflexion beleuchten wir, wo KI uns unterstützen kann, wo menschliche Intuition unersetzlich ist – und wie beide sinnvoll Hand in Hand arbeiten können.



## WB8\_Hochsensibilität

**Barbara SCHÖPF**  
Psychologin und Familientherapeutin

**Norbert SCHÖPF**  
Mathematiker, Deutschland

**abstract** Der Workshop lädt hochsensible Menschen zu einer intensiven Beschäftigung mit ihrem „Sosein“ ein. Eingeladen zu diesem Workshop sind ebenfalls Menschen, die glauben, dass in ihrem Verwandten - oder Freundeskreis jemand ist, der hochsensibel ist und die diese Person und dieses Thema besser verstehen wollen – sowie alle Interessierten.“ Intuitiv erfassen hochsensible Menschen zwischenmenschliche Prozesse sehr schnell. Daraus erklärt sich ihre besondere Neigung, in sozialen, beratenden, pädagogischen, helfenden und heilenden Berufen tätig zu sein bzw. sich im sozialen Bereich ehrenamtlich zu engagieren. In Ausübung ihrer Arbeit ist es für hochsensible Menschen ein sehr wichtiger Schritt, sich mit ihrer Hochsensibilität auseinanderzusetzen und sich darin wertzuschätzen.



## WB9\_Wir beFASSEN uns / Wir beFASSEN uns mit BERÜHRUNGEN / Wir be FASSEN uns mit BERÜHRUNGEN und bringen sie in WORTE

**Barbara RODE – Ludger STORCH**  
TelefonSeelsorge Bochum, Recklinghausen, Deutschland



**abstract** Bereits in den ersten Schwangerschaftswochen ist „touch“ bereits vorhanden. Er bildet die Grundlage dafür, wie wir uns selbst und die Welt um uns herum wahrnehmen. „Touch“ ist entscheidend dafür, wie wir fühlen und wie wir uns mit anderen verbinden. In diesem Workshop werden wir die Sprache des „touch“ sowohl physisch als auch emotional erkunden. Kurze theoretische Inputs werden durch erfahrungsbasierte Übungen, Selbstberührungspraktiken und die Verbalisierung emotionaler Reaktionen ergänzt. Wir werden reflektieren, wie physische Erfahrungen in Worte übersetzt werden können – insbesondere im Kontext von schriftlichen und gesprochenen Begegnungen, wie denen, die wir in der telefonischen Beratung führen. Dies ist eine Einladung, sich buchstäblich mit „touch“ auseinanderzusetzen: zu fühlen, zu reflektieren, auszudrücken – und Körpersprache als Ressource für Verbindung und Präsenz zu nutzen. ehrenamtlich zu engagieren. In Ausübung ihrer Arbeit ist es für hochsensible Menschen ein sehr wichtiger Schritt, sich mit ihrer Hochsensibilität auseinanderzusetzen und sich darin wertzuschätzen.



## WB11\_Experiment Zuhörkreis

**Daniela ROHLEDER**  
La Main Tendue Geneva Tel 143, Switzerland

**abstract** Die „listening circles“ sind ein neuer Prozess, um die im TES entwickelten Zuhörfähigkeiten für jeden zugänglich zu machen. Kommen Sie und machen Sie die Erfahrung, um sie dann vielleicht in unserem Umfeld, am Arbeitsplatz, in der Familie, in der Nachbarschaft usw. anzubieten.



## WB13\_Unlocking Resilience: Navigating Crisis Through Coping Channels

**Shiri DANIELS**  
ERAN, Hasharon, Israel

**abstract** In times of crisis, our ability to cope defines how we adapt, recover, and grow. This interactive workshop introduces the BASIC PH integrative model, exploring six unique coping channels we all possess. Through practical exercises, reflection, and group dialogue, participants will identify their personal coping styles and learn how to activate underused resources. Whether you're supporting others or navigating your own challenges, this session offers tools to strengthen resilience in real time.



## WB14\_Turning practice into guidance: a workshop in shaping a beginners manual for phone counseling

**Cornelia HULLA**

Telefonseelsorge Wien, Vienna, Austria

**abstract** In this interactive workshop, we aim to draw on the wealth of experience of all participants to compile a collection of concrete, practical approaches that support beginners in handling challenging conversational situations. We will examine real-life scenarios such as managing long monologues, addressing misunderstandings, navigating prolonged silences, responding to yelling, and dealing with other challenging behaviors. The focus will be on short, actionable interventions and techniques that can be applied immediately. All insights and strategies developed during the workshop will be gathered into a practical compendium, which may be shared with those interested in enhancing their phone counseling skills.



## WB15\_Making a connection by online chat

**Hilde LILLESTØL – Inger STØLAN HYMER**

Kirkens SOS, Oslo, Norway

**abstract** A growing number of people prefer using online chat because it's the medium they're most used to in daily life. Young people in particular use instant messaging services a lot in everyday life. This is mirrored in the demographic that uses our online chat service. The anonymity that text-based communication provides makes it easier to talk about sensitive issues such as mental health, relationships and suicidal thoughts. The workshop will explore the importance of ensuring that there is warmth and empathy in all written replies as there are some specific barriers to overcome in online chat. The aim is to enhance our skills in text based communication so that we can achieve better connection with the person using our services. In our experience online chat can be improved by applying emotion based knowledge and we wish to share our insight and explore how to communicate by text.



## WB16\_Les sens de l'écoute

**Elodie DEDERDING**

La Main Tendue Genève Tel 143, Suisse

**abstract** Pour pouvoir offrir une écoute profonde et bienveillante, il s'agit d'écouter non seulement avec ses oreilles, mais avec l'ensemble de ses sens. Faire l'expérience d'une écoute multisensorielle permet en effet d'aller vers une écoute vivante, directement connectée à l'expérience vécue. Dans cet atelier, nous vous proposerons différents exercices en lien avec vos 5 sens pour une expérimentation symbolique de l'écoute multisensorielle.



## WB17\_Embroidery, a symbolic language for human relationships

**Multilingual: French, English, Italian**

**Ivana RUDAZ**

La Main Tendue Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland

**abstract** This workshop offers a moment of connection, to yourself, to others, a moment of calm in the hustle and bustle of life. A slow rhythm that encourages listening, silence and presence (mirroring the AI that moves so fast and knows everything all the time). A thread that connects, crosses, knots, breaks and tangles. Stitch by stitch, thread by thread, the embroidery will invite participants to observe what is being woven under their hands. Each gesture is intentional, delicate, sometimes fragile, as in human relationships.



## WB18\_Eredeti természetünk földezése a tudatos jelenlét minőségein keresztül

**Zsuzsi MENKŐ**

Magyar Mindfulness Hálózat és Alapítvány, Budapest, Magyarország

**abstract** A mindfulness gyakorlása a szívbeli intelligencia felébresztését segíti: azt a belső bölcsességet, amely mindannyiunkban jelen van, de a hétköznapok rohanásában és a megélt nehézségekben gyakran háttérbe szorul. A mindfulness 8 alapvető hozzáállásának (pl. ítékezésmentesség, türelem, bizalom, együttérzés önmagunkkal és másokkal) művelésén keresztül újra közelebb kerülhetünk szívünk hangjához. A 90 perces workshop során sajátélményen keresztül tapasztalhatják meg a résztvevők, hogyan váltunk legtöbbször problémamegoldó üzemmódba ahelyett, hogy a jelen pillanatban, létezés- üzemmódban kapcsolódnánk önmagunkhoz és másokhoz. Rövid vezetett meditációk és interaktív, kérdésalapú reflexiók részek segítenek tudatosítani a figyelem természetét, automatikus reakcióinkat és a 8 hozzáállás gyakorlati jelentőségét. A közös megbeszélések kis- és nagycsoportban támogatják a tapasztalatok elmélyítését. A workshop célja, hogy a résztvevők személyesen megtapasztalják a mindfulness alapminőségeit, és a szívbeli intelligencia forrásából meríthessenek munkájuk során is.

SATURDAY, 11 JULY 2026  
/ MORNING

# “Empowering our human skills and values”

MAIN SESSION 4  
9.00 – 10.30

Language: English  
Translation: Hungarian, German, French, Italian

Gömb Aula

Session Chair: **Barbara JENKO**



## Alive in the Age of AI

**Calvin Niles**

Coach, consultant, and author known as *The Mindful Storyteller*, working with leaders and organisations on meaning-making and leadership in the age of AI. Author of *Mindful Storytelling* and *The Sun Rises in Eastmoor*, and focuses on the intersection of consciousness, organisational change, and technology. He is also the founder of CAISCEN and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA). United Kingdom

**abstract** As artificial intelligence reshapes how we live, work, and connect, one question echoes across every corner of society: What does it mean to be human? In his keynote, Calvin Niles invites us to pause and rediscover the essence of our humanity beyond what we produce or perfect, and focus more on how we are. Drawing from mindfulness, storytelling, contemplative wisdom, and the four enduring invitations that call us inward, into relationship, into community, and into service, Calvin explores how presence becomes the ultimate act of reverence and renewal. He reminds us that while machines may imitate thought, humans can awaken awareness, tell stories that matter, and practice the courage of simply being. In the age of AI, the greatest revolution may not be technological, but transformational: a return to the power of presence itself.



## Healing the heart and reclaiming our humanity

**Olivier CLERC**

Writer, international speaker, and facilitator based in France, with 40 years of experience and 25 books translated into 17 languages. Founder of the Circles of Forgiveness and Honorary President of Association Pardon International, focusing on forgiveness as a personal and collective practice. His work bridges spirituality, storytelling, and personal development, and he has collaborated with several leading figures in the field. Switzerland

**abstract** In some of its current uses, the rise of AI highlights the frightening level of emotional disconnection many people live with today. But how can we be surprised, in a culture that has placed all its bets on the intellect? The result is that most of us have hearts that are wounded, withered, or numbed. The consequences are visible every day in the news.

So how can we heal the heart?

There is a royal path: forgiveness.

Few words are as emotionally charged—and as poorly defined—as this one. That makes it all the more difficult to practice, even though it is key to restoring our original humanity and healing both individually and collectively.

In this talk, Olivier Clerc will begin by redefining what forgiveness truly means today. He will also clarify what forgiveness is not, by identifying the main obstacles to its practice. Most importantly, he will show how practicing forgiveness can transform not only our relationships, but also our way of thinking—and even our physical health. Drawing on real-life examples, he will offer concrete guidance for walking the path of this “healing of the heart,” which stands as one of the great tasks of the 21st century, and a vital step toward the better world we all long for.

THEMATIC SESSION  
TS7  
11.00 – 12.30

Language: English  
Translation: German, French, Italian

Gömb Aula

Session Chair: **Jaap JAKOBS**



## Love in Action

**Laura FORMENTINI**

Philanthropist, photographer, writer, and international speaker who has dedicated over 25 years to humanitarian work supporting children, animals, and communities worldwide. She serves as Honorary Ambassador of the Garden of Peace, Ambassador of the Salima Animal Trust, and Liaison for International Cities of Peace in Tangier. Her TEDx talk “Love in Action” promotes resilience, compassion, and global connection. Italy-Spain

**abstract** For more than 25 years, I practiced “love in action” as a nonprofit photographer and fundraiser - supporting children’s education, creating animal sanctuaries, and fostering hope in vulnerable communities. Then, in rural Ethiopia, I received the devastating news that my son Blaise had died by suicide.

As I waited to begin the long journey back to the United States, a kind man named Assefa sat beside me, holding my hand for ten hours.

That simple gesture did not erase my grief, but it revealed something profound: even the smallest acts of care can ripple outward with immeasurable strength.

Since then, I have carried this deeper understanding into all my work, from creating peace gardens in places scarred by conflict to nurturing global projects of compassion.

The human touch, I have learned, is not only physical—it is the empathy, presence, and love we extend to one another.

This talk reflects on how the human touch - whether through a life’s mission or a moment’s kindness - can heal, connect, and transform.



## How can I help you? Supportive methods in folk tales

**Ildikó BOLDIZSÁR**

Writer, folk tale researcher, folk tale therapist, and university lecturer, and the developer of the Metamorphoses Folk Tale Therapy Method. Author of 62 books and founded the magazine Tale, the Metamorphoses Therapy Association, and the International Metamorphoses School. She teaches her method in Hungary and internationally. Hungary

**abstract** Fairy tales (a type of folk tale) are stories featuring seven recurring characters, each of whom has a specific role to play in bringing about a “happy ending.” The helper role is of outstanding importance in these tales: he/she embodies the abilities that the hero lacks, without which the hero would be unable to achieve his goal. The climax of fairy tales is the scene in which the hero and his helper find each other and then join forces. However, this process is never random: there is a specific order to the type of helper assigned to a fairy tale hero or a given problem. The presentation introduces this logical connection model, also touching on how today’s helping professionals can use the helper model found in fairy tales in their work.

**THEMATIC SESSION**  
TS8  
11.00 – 12.30

**Language: Hungarian - German**  
**Translation: German – Hungarian**

Konferencia room

Session Chair:

**Melinda MEDGYASZAI** and **Barbara JENKO**



## The Mindful Professional: Cultivating Presence, Compassion and Balance in Helping Roles

**Dóra PERCZEL FORINTOS**

Full Professor of Clinical Psychology, psychotherapist, CBT (EABCT, EAP) and mindfulness teacher trained at Harvard, Oxford, and Padua. Her work focuses on suicide prevention, anxiety, PTSD, obesity, and clinical applications of mindfulness. She led the Clinical Psychology program at Semmelweis University for 24 years and has published widely in CBT and mental health care. Hungary

**abstract** Helping professionals – especially volunteers working in emotional support and crisis helplines – are exposed daily to human suffering, distress, and crisis situations. This continuous emotional burden can easily lead to compassion fatigue, resulting in burnout, loss of motivation, and psychological strain. Mindfulness offers a practical and evidence-based way to foster emotional balance, resilience, and professional authenticity. Cultivating mindful awareness enhances non-judgmental attention, strengthens self-reflection, and promotes acceptance of emotions – all essential skills in emotionally demanding helping roles. Research shows that regular mindfulness practice reduces stress and impulsivity, improves emotion regulation, and enhances psychological well-being. In this way, compassion fatigue can transform into compassion balance: a form of empathy that sustains rather than depletes. Mindfulness thus serves not only as a form of self-care but also as a foundation for professional quality, enabling helpers to remain authentic, present, and compassionate over the long term. In our study, we explored how mindfulness training influences these processes among helpline volunteers and will present the findings in our talk.



## How can we offer comfort?

**Martin FRANKEN**

Philosopher, educator, and sociologist, as well as a focusing and trauma therapist trained in approaches including Peter Levine's and Luise Reddemann's methods. He works in life counselling, hospice care, and delivers lectures and seminars on therapy, mindfulness, and philosophy. Germany

**abstract** We all need comfort because, as human beings, we are always suffering creatures. Especially when suffering is deep and persistent, we depend on the comfort of others because our existence is affected by something that cannot be put right or healed. Such comfort comes primarily through a deep connection with another person. In this process, the other person is addressed in their deepest potential as a human being: as a compassionate being who empathetically and mindfully takes in the suffering of the other, feels it, endures it and thus allows it to be there with them and carries it out. This comforts, calms and alleviates the pain.

In my lecture, I would also like to discuss possibilities for self-comfort through mindfulness, self-compassion, self-acceptance and self-care.

**WORKSHOPS**  
11.00 – 12.30



## WC1\_Menschliche Werte und Fähigkeiten

**Ute HANSBERG**

Evangelische TS – Essen, Deutschland

**abstract** In diesem Workshop soll es darum gehen, gemeinsam eine Collage zu gestalten, die unsere Gedanken und Gefühle zum Thema "Menschliche Fähigkeiten und Werte" zum Ausdruck bringt. Dafür bitte ich alle Teilnehmenden darum, Materialien (Bilder, Buchstaben/Überschriften aus Zeitungen, Symbole, kurze eigene Texte, Stoff, Musik, Düfte...) zum Thema mitzubringen, die nach einer Runde des persönlichen Austauschs zu einem großen Bild zusammengesetzt werden. Durch diese gemeinschaftliche Erfahrung können wir uns unserer menschlichen Fähigkeiten bewusstwerden und unsere Kreativität stärken.

**notizen** Bringen Sie Materialien mit, wie z. B. Bilder, Briefe/Zeitungsauschnitte, Symbole, kurze eigene Texte, Materialien, Musik, Düfte sowie einige Ihrer Lieblingsstifte und -farben.



## WC2\_Nervensystem in Balance - Sicherheit, Spiel, Verbindung

**Elke PRINZ**

Telefonseelsorge Oberösterreich, Linz, Austria

**abstract** In diesem Workshop erkunden wir Wege zu mehr innerer Ruhe und lebendiger Präsenz – im Kontakt mit uns selbst und mit anderen. Über Atem, Körperwahrnehmung und einfache Übungen zur Regulation des Nervensystems (Vagusnerv) schaffen wir einen sicheren Raum, der Entspannung und Wachheit zugleich ermöglicht. Partnerübungen laden ein, Resonanz und Verbindung spielerisch zu erfahren – in der „PlayZone“ zwischen Sicherheit und Leichtigkeit. Ziel ist es, Isolation und Anspannung zu lösen und neue Ressourcen für Begegnung, Resilienz und Freude im Alltag zu entdecken.



## WC3\_Die Gemeinsamkeiten der Bibel und des Koran

**Uwe MÜLLER**

Kirchliche Telefonseelsorge Berlin, Deutschland

**Imran SAGIR**

Muslimischen Seelsorgetelefons MUTES in Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Das Christentum und der Islam scheinen in ihren Wertvorstellungen und Geboten sehr weit auseinanderzuliegen. So suggeriert es uns zumindest die öffentliche Wahrnehmung. Politik, Medien und auch der Versuch im Migrationsgeschehen eine kulturelle Identität zu bewahren, tragen häufig dazu bei Unterschiede zu betonen; Gemeinsamkeiten werden erst gar nicht erwähnt. In Bibel und Koran finden wir aber die Erzählung der gleichen Geschichten und vor allem deren gleiche Deutung.





## WC4\_Verständnis ohne Grenzen?

**Jessica LEVY**

SOS Détresse - mir hëlfelefen iwwer Telefon an online, Luxembourg

**abstract** „Das größte Geschenk, das ich einem anderen Menschen machen kann, ist, ihn zu sehen, ihm zuzuhören, ihn zu verstehen und ihn zu berühren.“ (Virginia Satir) Verstanden zu werden ist ein Bedürfnis, mit dem sich viele an uns- und zunehmend häufiger auch an die KI-wenden. Dies wirft die Frage auf, welche Rolle unsere Gespräche sowohl im Kontrast als auch in Ergänzung zu einer KI spielen können. Ziel dieses Workshops wird es sein, uns mit dem Verständnis-Begriff und den jeweiligen Grenzen des Verständnisses Auseinandersetzen, sowie darüber zu reflektieren, wieviel Verständnis wir haben können und wie wir es ausdrücken.



## WC5\_Nonverbale Kommunikation

**Matthias O. SCHNEIDER**

KTS BB-Kirchliche Telefonseelsorge Berlin, Brandenburg, schlesische Oberlausitz, Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Der weit überwiegende Teil unserer Kommunikation geschieht non-verbal. Innerhalb dieser non- oder präverbalen Gesprächsform übermitteln wir mehr von uns selbst als uns manchmal lieb ist. Im therapeutischen „face to face-Setting“ ist die Beachtung dieser „stummen“ Kommunikation unerlässlich. Und am Telefon? Vielleicht werden wir 120 Minuten nicht sprechen..., In jedem Fall aber werden wir die Auswirkung körperlicher Zustände auf die sprachliche/stimmliche Kommunikation untersuchen.



## WC6\_„Lieber Sokrates, sollen wir Gespräche mit niemand führen?“

**Stephan BÜCHENBACHER**

Telefon 143-Die Dargebotene Hand, Basel, Switzerland

**Imran SAGIR**

Muslimischen Seelsorgetelefons MUTES in Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Seelsorgegespräche beruhen auf dem Dialog autonomer Subjekte, während Gespräche mit Chatbots Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehungen bleiben. Ein bewusstes Gegenüber existiert schlicht nicht. Wir sprechen mit «niemand». Der Workshop fragt: Was macht den Kern des Menschsein aus, und was ist ein Chatbot? Aufbauend auf fünf Thesen - nur Menschen verstehen Menschen, Chatbots hören nicht wirklich zu, Menschen suchen seelische Nähe, diese entsteht durch tiefgründige Gespräche, und solche Gespräche sind nur zwischen Menschen möglich - werden die Teilnehmenden diskutieren, ob Mensch und KI im Gespräch noch zuverlässig zu unterscheiden sind, welche Chancen oder Risiken KI in der Seelsorge birgt und warum eine kritische Reflexion notwendig ist. Die Methode umfasst einen Impulsvortrag, Diskussionen in Kleingruppen und einen gemeinsamen Austausch im Plenum.



## WC7\_„Survivors“ – Suizidtrauer und unterstützende Reaktionen

**Bettina SCHWAB**

professionelle Leiterin der Telefonseelsorge Berlin, Deutschland

**Andrea DI BIAGIO**

professionelle italienische Fotografin, spezialisiert auf dokumentarische, redaktionelle und kommerzielle Fotografie, Italien



**abstract** Aufbauend auf den Bildern und Geschichten der Fotoausstellung „Survivors“ bietet dieses Workshop eine professionelle und dialogische Erkundung der Situation von Menschen, die durch Suizid Angehörige verloren haben. In einem moderierten Gespräch reflektiert der Fotograf über die Ursprünge des Projekts und seine Erfahrungen mit Personen, die durch Suizid betroffen sind. Ein psychologischer Input beleuchtet zentrale Aspekte der Trauer nach einem Suizid, einschließlich spezifischer Belastungen und sozialer Herausforderungen. Zudem werden praktische Vorschläge für einen sensiblen und unterstützenden Umgang mit von Suizid betroffenen Menschen angeboten und gemeinsam diskutiert, die sowohl in persönlichen Kontexten als auch in Gesprächen innerhalb telefonischer Krisendienste angewendet werden können.

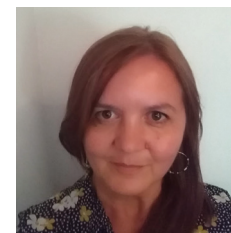


## WC8\_Jana, die virtuelle Stimme der Telefonseelsorge sorgt für die Lösung unserer Probleme oder wie begegne ich kreativ meinen Gefühlen

**Cornelia BREU**

TS München evangelisch, Deutschland

**abstract** „Hallo, hier ist Jana, Ihre virtuelle Stimme der Telefonseelsorge - was kann ich für Sie tun? Sie haben ein Problem? In welches Thema würden Sie ihr Problem einordnen? 1-Depression, 2-Einsamkeit, 3-Beziehungsprobleme, 4-Suizid? Bitte wählen Sie ein Thema. Ich habe Sie nicht genau verstanden.“ Mit kreativen, gestalterischen Mitteln werden wir unseren besonderen Eigenarten und unseren Gefühlen begegnen. Wird es ein Fazit geben? Wie wird die nette virtuelle Stimme mit unseren intensiven menschlichen Bedürfnissen zurechtkommen? Ist es Jana möglich den ganz individuellen Perspektivwechsel zu vollziehen, um Beziehung möglich zu machen?



## WC9\_Sinn im Leben finden

**Irma SIMÓ**

Áradat Association, Miercurea-Ciuc, Harghita, Romania

**abstract** Viktor E. Frankl, Arzt, Philosoph und Begründer der Dritten Wiener Schule für Psychotherapie, Logotherapie und Existenzanalyse, betont, dass jeder Mensch vor allem daran interessiert ist, einen Sinn in seinem Leben zu finden. Er kam zu dem Schluss, dass wir in einem Zeitalter existenzieller

Frustration leben. Trotz aller Sinnlosigkeit und Schrecken in der Welt vertrauen die Menschen darauf, dass das Leben als Ganzes sinnvoll ist. Ihr tiefstes Verlangen ist das Verlangen nach Sinn im Leben, das heißt, sie wollen in jeder Situation ihres Lebens einen Sinn finden. Der Mensch strebt daher in erster Linie danach, Werte zu verwirklichen und damit seinem Leben einen Sinn zu geben. Nach Frankls Ansatz ist die Verwirklichung von Werten auf drei Arten möglich: (1) durch Schaffen – die Welt in irgendeiner Weise gestalten, (2) durch Erleben – die Welt in uns aufnehmen, (3) durch Leiden – das heißt, unser Schicksal, unser Kreuz und das Unveränderliche akzeptieren. Nachdem wir kreative und erfahrungsbezogene Werte gefunden und erlebt haben, gelangen wir zu den Werten, die unser Leben prägen. Im Workshop werden wir nach der Einführung in das Thema zunächst mit kunsttherapeutischen Methoden arbeiten und Frankls Triade auf diese einzigartige Weise der Werteerkundung kennenlernen.



## WC10\_Prompt, Kontext, Haltung – KI im Dienst emotionaler Unterstützung

**Birgit KNATZ**

Leiterin der Telefonseelsorge Hagen-Mark, Deutschland

**abstract** Künstliche Intelligenz verändert die Landschaft der emotionalen Unterstützung, sowohl auf Seiten der Ratsuchenden wie der Beratenden. Wer diese Entwicklung mitgestalten möchte, benötigt ein fundiertes Verständnis und einen klaren Standpunkt. Genau darum geht es in diesem Workshop. Im ersten Teil erkunden wir die Grundlagen: Wie funktionieren KI-Systeme? Wie lassen sie sich durch gezielte Prompts wirksam steuern? Welche Rolle spielen dabei Kontext, Haltung und ethische Verantwortung? Im zweiten Teil wenden wir den Blick auf die Praxis: Was passiert, wenn Mensch und Maschine im Beratungsprozess zusammenwirken? Welche Potenziale eröffnen sich und wo liegen die Grenzen? Denn die beraterische Beziehung bleibt das zentrale Wirkprinzip. Das ist nicht verhandelbar. Der Workshop verbindet fachliche Impulse mit eigenem Ausprobieren und kollegialem Austausch. Vorkenntnisse sind nicht erforderlich, nur Neugier und die Bereitschaft, Neues auszuprobieren.



## WC13\_Unlocking Resilience: Navigating Crisis Through Coping Channels

**Shiri DANIELS**

ERAN, Hasharon, Israel

**abstract** In times of crisis, our ability to cope defines how we adapt, recover, and grow. This interactive workshop introduces the BASIC PH integrative model, exploring six unique coping channels we all possess. Through practical exercises, reflection, and group dialogue, participants will identify their personal coping styles and learn how to activate underused resources. Whether you're supporting others or navigating your own challenges, this session offers tools to strengthen resilience in real time.

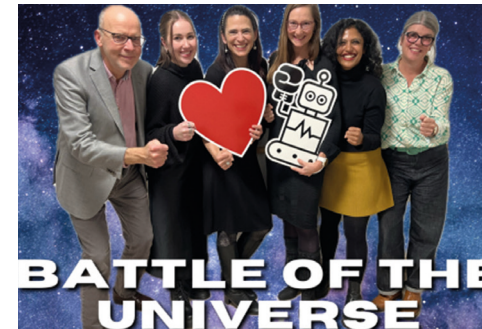


## WC14\_Building a future proof volunteer policy

**Ingrid VANDERHOEVEN**

Tele-Onthaal, Brussels, Belgium

**abstract** How can we truly find, engage, inspire, and retain volunteers? Not simply to fill shifts or cover the helpline 24/7, but to shape a future where volunteering is meaningful, sustainable, and rewarding for everyone involved. For one year, we embarked on a journey with more than 100 people; volunteers, former volunteers, prospective volunteers, professionals, and board members. Together, we explored bold ideas, tested new approaches, and reimagined what volunteering could look like when every individual feels seen, heard, and supported. In this workshop, we invite you into our story. We will share the insights, the experiments, and the decisions that are shaping a stronger, more inspiring volunteer program, one that looks beyond today's needs and toward a shared horizon of connection, participation and impact.



## WC15\_Battle of the Universe: Collective Human Wisdom vs AI

**Eva HAUSSMANN – Diana JOSS – Minka KOECHLI**

**Melanie ALTER – Matthias HERREN – Bindu FERNANDES**

Die Dargebotene Hand, Zürich, Switzerland

**abstract** Join this fast-paced, interactive workshop where you'll go head-to-head with AI in responding to real-life challenges from emotional support work – from acute suicidality to boundary-crossing callers. In each of 3–4 rounds, you and your group will craft your best response to a use case – and then compare it to what AI came up with. The audience votes after each round... and in the end, we'll crown a winner. In the final debrief, we'll explore where AI supports us, where human intuition is irreplaceable – and how the two might work hand in hand.



## WC16\_ Les sens de l'écoute

**Elodie DEDERDING**

La Main Tendue Genève Tel 143, Suisse

**abstract** Pour pouvoir offrir une écoute profonde et bienveillante, il s'agit d'écouter non seulement avec ses oreilles, mais avec l'ensemble de ses sens. Faire l'expérience d'une écoute multisensorielle permet en effet d'aller vers une écoute vivante, directement connectée à l'expérience vécue. Dans cet atelier, nous vous proposerons différents exercices en lien avec vos 5 sens pour une expérimentation symbolique de l'écoute multisensorielle.



## WC17\_ Expérimentez le cercle d'écoute

**Yaëli LIEBKIND**

Directrice de La Main Tendue Genève (Tél. 143)

**abstract** Atelier d'expérimentation des cercles d'écoute est un nouveau dispositif pour promouvoir les compétences d'écoute partout et pour toutes-tous. Venez en faire l'expérience afin de peut-être en proposer autour de vous.



## WC18\_ Jelen lenni mások számára – önmagad elvesztése nélkül

**Adrienn LUKÁCS**

Magyar Mindfulness Hálózat és Alapítvány, Budapest, Magyarország

**abstract** Ez a workshop arra összpontosít, hogyan lehetnek a segítők tudatosan és együttérzően jelen mások számára anélkül, hogy elveszítenék önmagukat a kapcsolatot. A résztvevők rövid, könnyen alkalmazható mindfulness eszközöket sajátíthatnak el, amelyek segítenek fenntartani a belső egyensúlyt és megelőzni az érzelmi kimerültséget. A módszertan interaktív: a rövid elméleti bevezetést önreflexív kérdések, mindfulness gyakorlatok és páros vagy csoportos megosztások követik. A cél, hogy a résztvevők a gyakorlatokat a mindennapi életben – munkahelyi vagy személyes helyzetekben – alkalmazzák, lehetővé téve a fenntartható jelenlétet mások számára, miközben saját magukról is gondoskodnak.



## WC19\_ A belső színpad – avagy hogyan egyeztessük belső hangjainkat a TCI módszere alapján

**Bence BUZA with Melinda HAL**

Budapest ÉLET Helpline, Hungary

**abstract** A workshopon megismerkedünk a Témacentrikus Interakció módszerének egyik eszközével: Friedemann Schulz von Thun kommunikációpszichológus „Belső színpad“ modelljével nézünk rá belső konfliktusunk szereplőire.



## WC20\_ Oltre l'Hype: Cosa Sono Davvero i Chatbot AI e Cosa Sanno/Non Sanno Fare Bene

**Christian CORRÒ**

Ricercatore presso il Dipartimento di Matematica, Informatica e Fisica e membro dell'HCI Lab, Università di Udine, Italia

**abstract** Questo workshop ha l'obiettivo di aiutare i partecipanti a costruire un modello mentale accurato dei moderni chatbot basati sull'intelligenza artificiale, attraverso un approccio pratico e non tecnico. Lo scopo è comprendere cosa sia realmente un chatbot, ma soprattutto cosa non sia, e quindi cosa possa o non possa fare, per promuovere un utilizzo consapevole. Attraverso attività guidate e pratiche, esploreremo come un chatbot elabora le frasi degli utenti, genera risposte e quali sono i suoi limiti. La relazione risponderà ad alcune domande comuni: i chatbot comprendono veramente ciò che diciamo? Possono capire le emozioni? Imparano da ciò che raccontiamo loro? Perché a volte commettono errori? Il workshop includerà anche una sessione in cui i partecipanti potranno interagire con un chatbot avanzato visualizzato tramite un visore di realtà aumentata, per sperimentare come la presenza di un corpo umano, anche se virtuale, possa influenzare il modo in cui percepiamo e interagiamo con questi sistemi.

## SATURDAY, 11 JULY 2026 / AFTERNOON

**THEMATIC SESSION**  
TS9  
14.30 – 15.30

**Language: English**  
**Translation: German, French, Italian**

Gömb Aula

Session Chair: **Mit VAN PAESSCHEN**



### AI chatbots and helplines: opportunity or threat?

**Tim VANHOVE**

Sociologist with over 20 years of experience in research and development at Artevelde University of Applied Sciences in Ghent. His work focuses on participatory, practice-based research and the real-world application of digital technologies in care and well-being. He currently studies the ethical, legal, and practical implications of integrating conversational AI into mental health and social work helplines. Belgium

**abstract** *What is conversational AI and how can chatbots like ChatGPT impact counselling helplines? What are the legal and ethical implications of their possible use in helplines?*

As conversational AI tools become increasingly popular, chat counselling helplines are confronted with pressing questions about if these technologies can be responsibly used or not. There is a pressing need to consider the ethical foundations guiding such use, particularly regarding the level of autonomy of AI chatbots. Little is known on the degree to which AI systems should independently interact with users without human intervention in chat counselling. Defining these ethical boundaries is crucial, particularly in sensitive contexts (such as abuse or suicide) with vulnerable populations. In this session, we will discuss these ethical options and their possible effects for users. We will show what the effects can be of ethically trained AI chatbots on their behaviour. The discussion on AI chatbot autonomy will prove to be a very human one.

**THEMATIC SESSION**  
TS10  
14.30 – 15.30

**Language: German**  
**Translation: Hungarian**

Konferencia room

Session Chair: **Michael GRUNDHOFF**



### The human touch: the ability to form bonds on the one hand and the ability to be autonomous on the other as pivotal points for communication, touch-ability and human freedom

**Stefan SCHUMACHER**

Director of the TES Listening Center in Hagen and represents the Archdiocese of Paderborn in helpline counselling. He has held leadership roles within IFOTES and has worked since 1996 as a trainer, coach, and supervisor specializing in communication and personal development. His research focuses on meaning in life and the role of language in communication and personal growth. Deutschland

**abstract** What defines us as humans and keeps us healthy is our ability to form bonds and our ability to be autonomous. This apparent contradiction is the great challenge we humans face from birth. Stable attachment experiences enable us to communicate and interact; the pursuit of independence and development allows us to surpass ourselves. If one of these poles is restricted in its development, this has consequences for our ability to deal with crises and all kinds of life complications.

This lecture introduces the Theory of Attachment (John Bowlby and Mary Anisworth) and discusses its implications for life management from a psychological and neurobiological perspective – including which typical disorders of attachment and autonomy behaviour can manifest themselves in adulthood. In a second step, the consequences for TES support are derived and what is important for crisis support from the perspective of attachment theory. Basic psychological needs (Klaus Grawe) play a central role in this. Against this background, reference is also made to the opportunities and limitations of using AI in crisis support.

**WORKSHOPS**  
 14.30 – 17.00


## WD1\_Hypnotische Sprachbilder erkennen und nutzen

**Carl HAGEMANN**

Telefonseelsorge Aachen, Deutschland

**abstract** Wir finden heraus, wie man hypnotische Sprachbilder erkennt. Danach lernen wir, wie man sie benutzt, um gesünder zu werden. Das basiert auf den Ideen von Milton Erickson und Gunther Schmidt.



## WD2\_KI und das Empathische Schreiben

**Matthias O. SCHNEIDER**

Kirchliche Telefonseelsorge Berlin-Brandenburg, Deutschland

**abstract** In diesem Workshop wollen wir experimentieren, wie das geschriebene Wort als Intervention/Antwort auf eine Frage oder Krisensituation variieren kann und welche empathischen Botschaften in den unterschiedlichen Antworten und Interventionen versteckt sind. Wir fragen: Sind in der schriftlichen Beratung Fehler erlaubt? Macht die KI-Fehler? Wie liest die KI-Bilder im Gegensatz zu uns? Verstehen wir die KI und versteht sie uns?



## WD3\_Landkarten der Verletzlichkeit

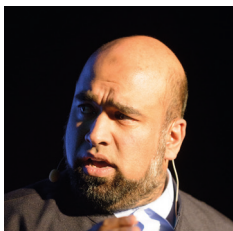
**Uwe MÜLLER**

Kirchliche Telefonseelsorge Berlin, Deutschland

**Imran SAGIR**

Muslimischen Seelsorgetelefons MUTES in Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Die Landkarte unserer Verletzlichkeit ist einzigartig, ist individuell. 8 Milliarden Menschen, 8 Milliarden Landkarten. Gleichwohl gibt es Ähnlichkeiten in Gruppen der gleichen Herkunft, Kultur, Religion. Im interkulturellen und interreligiösen Dialog wollen wir anhand der Zusammenarbeit der christlichen Telefonseelsorge Berlin und des muslimischen Seelsorgetelefons Berlin herausfinden, wo es Gemeinsamkeiten und zu beachtende Unterschiede gibt.



## WD4\_Wie kann menschliche Qualität und KI zusammenwirken?

**Katharina KÜHNE**

Telefon DOWERIA and ukrainisch und russisch-prächtiges Seelsorgetelefon, Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** In der Beratung der niedrigschwelligen psychosozialen Notfallversorgung scheinen sich das Angebot eines menschlichen Kontaktes und das Angebot einer KI unversöhnlich gegenüberzustehen. Gibt es vielleicht dennoch Möglichkeiten der Ergänzung beider Qualitäten?



## WD5\_Human touch

**Cathy CLIFT**

Kirchliche Telefonseelsorge Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Digitalisierung, künstliche Intelligenz, Bots in der Therapie und in der Beratung? Wie gelingt es uns in dieser virtuellen Welt als ein menschliches Angebot fühlbar zu bleiben? Wie gelingt uns echte Anteilnahme und echtes Mitgefühl? Bieten die Algorithmen durch ihren Informationsvorsprung Vorteile, die wir mit unserem In-Resonanz-Sein nicht bieten können? Stellt sich die Frage, was wirkt eigentlich? Ist es nicht vielleicht das Unperfekte, das „da weiß ich gerade auch nicht...“, das eine menschliche Nähe bringt, die heilsam und tröstlich ist? Mit Selbstachtsamkeit, Selbsterfahrung und der Begegnung im Raum nähern wir uns diesen Fragen.



## WD6\_Wie wir leidenden Menschen einen heilsamen Raum öffnen können

**Martin FRANKEN**

Praxis für Lebensberatung und Focusing-Therapie, Dorweiler, Deutschland

**abstract** Wenn wir Menschen begegnen, die tief und anhaltend leiden, wenn es buchstäblich um Leben und Tod geht, dann fehlen uns oft die Worte. Wer einen geliebten Menschen verloren hat, wer an einer unheilbaren Erkrankung leidet oder wer an seinem Leben verzweifelt, dem können wir nicht sagen: „Das wird schon wieder.“ Aber wir können diesem Menschen auf eine besondere Weise begegnen: aufrichtig, sein Leiden anerkennend, mitfühlend und mit achtsamer Präsenz. Auf diese Weise öffnen wir einen Raum für den anderen Menschen und ermöglichen ihm, wirklich da zu sein. In diesem Workshop möchte ich anhand einiger Übungen erlebbar und spürbar machen, wie eine solche Präsenz möglich werden kann und wie sie eine heilsame Wirkung entfalten kann, die vom anderen Menschen als wohltuend und als tröstlich erfahren wird.



## WD7\_Empathie – die Superkraft des Menschen? Chancen und Risiken einer zutiefst menschlichen Qualität

**Ulrike DAHME**  
**Ulrike ZELLER**

TelefonSeelsorge in der Erzdiözese München und Freising, Katholische TelefonSeelsorge München, Deutschland



**abstract** Als TelefonSeelsorger: innen sind wir stolz auf unsere Fähigkeit zur Empathie, eine unserer Kernkompetenzen. Angesichts auf empathische Reaktion trainierter KIs fragen wir uns:

- Was ist Empathie und was nicht?
- Was verhindert Empathie?
- Wann wird Empathie für uns gefährlich?

Es wird theoretischen Input geben, kreativen Austausch und ein Video.



## WD8\_Circle of Forgiveness

**Olivier CLERC**

Swiss-born writer, international keynote speaker, and experienced facilitator, France.

**abstract** Based on Olivier Clerc's encounter with don Miguel Ruiz, Circles of Forgiveness aim at allowing you, in just 2hrs, to experience a beautiful ritual for the healing of your heart, that is both very simple and powerful. A Circle of Forgiveness is a transpersonal process which allows you to experience forgiveness towards others and yourself, without having to mention your emotional wounds and difficult issues to the other participants. This ritual allows your heart to heal and to get rid of the many layers of resentment, sadness or hatred which keep it from expressing fully its love.

Circles of Forgiveness exist today in some 15 countries.

[www.circlesofforgiveness.org](http://www.circlesofforgiveness.org)



## WD9\_Einführung in die Restorative Circles

**Edgar MÜLLER**  
**Ursula GROOS**

Akademie der Restorativen Praktiken, Berlin, Deutschland

**abstract** Konflikte gehören zu unserem Alltag - im Beruf, in Familien, in Schulen und in jeder Gemeinschaft. Sie sind unvermeidlich, manchmal schmerzhaft, oft anstrengend und doch steckt in ihnen eine große Chance für unser Zusammenleben. Mit den Mitteln der Restorativen Praktiken erhalten wir die Möglichkeit, unsere Beziehungen zu heilen, Gemeinschaft zu stärken und echtes Verstehen zu schaffen. Statt Schuldige zu suchen, wird ein Weg eröffnet, wie Beteiligte Verantwortung übernehmen, Verständnis füreinander entwickeln und Vertrauen wiederaufbauen können.

Programm:

- Restorative Circles Kurzfilm (Trailer), Fragen und Antworten
- Vorstellung des Modells der Restorativen Circles
- Praktischer Teil in Form von Übungen der Kreisarbeit



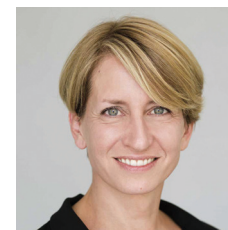
## WD10\_„Can't Feel Nothing“ – ein Dokumentarfilm von David Borenstein

**Melinda MEDGYASZAI**

kognitiv-behaviorale Psychotherapeutin, Ungarn

**Bettina SCHWAB**

Direktorin der Telefonseelsorge Berlin, Deutschland



**abstract** Auf dem Handy im Bett scrollen: wütende Meinungsartikel, niedliche Tiere, schreckliche Kriegsbilder. Warum fühlt sich heute alles gleich an? Warum kann ich keine Emotionen mehr empfinden? Regisseur David Borenstein reist um die Welt, um herauszufinden, warum das Gefühl der Gefühllosigkeit so verbreitet ist.

*David Borenstein ist Gewinner des Oscars 2026 für den besten Dokumentarfilm mit dem Film Mr. Nobody Against Putin*



## WD13\_Idiolectics: Listening is a powerful language. New impulses for conversations on the phone

**Monica GÜTERMANN**  
**Tom ALBRECHT**  
**Gabriela GITZELMANN**  
**Susanne KISS**  
**Robert ZAHND**

Voluntary staff at Tel. 143 Zurich, Switzerland

**abstract** How can callers discover new perspectives or sources of strength in a short amount of time? Idiolectic conversation guidance is a simple but highly effective approach to make exactly that possible. By listening attentively, consciously stepping back, and refraining from interpretations, we give special attention to the individual language of the callers. Striking, meaningful words are picked up in the responses to short, open-ended questions - this often leads to surprising inner journeys to unexpected resources. In the workshop, we will get to know the basic idea of Idiolectics and try it out in small exercises. The aim is to experience a respectful, open-ended style of conversation that gives callers the feeling of being heard and understood - a valuable addition to telephone work.

Further information on the method: [www.idiolektik.de](http://www.idiolektik.de)



## WD17\_Quelle est la valeur ajoutée de l'écoute par un être humain et peut-on travailler « main dans la main » avec l'IA?

Catherine REINBOLD

Aurélié BOGAERTS

Télé-Accueil Asbl, Namur Brabant Wallon et Liège, Belgium



**abstract** Par cet atelier nous vous proposerons de travailler deux axes : dans un premier temps, nous vous présenterons les résultats d'un sondage mené auprès d'écouterants des postes de Télé-Accueil Belgique. Ce questionnaire aura permis aux écouterants de se positionner sur la perception qu'ils ont de leur écoute, et du caractère humain qui la caractérise par rapport à celle d'une IA. Cela nous aidera alors à faire des liens avec votre propre ressenti et expérience. Il vous sera ensuite proposé de mettre en lumière ce qui, pour vous, font de l'offre d'écoute que nous proposons, les valeurs essentielles d'une écoute humaine. Dans un second temps nous vous inviterons à réfléchir de façons créatives et variées à comment concilier l'écoute par un être humain avec les avancées de l'IA dans le panorama des services d'aide.



## WD18\_The Touch of Nature - disconnect in order to reconnect

Eszter SZABO

Neurodivergent entrepreneur, mindfulness teacher specialized to nature connection and youth, Hungary

**abstract** „Leave AI behind and let Danube wash away all the burden of your Mind.“ Join us for an outdoor experience at Kopaszi-bay, where we are going to explore Nature with all of our senses. Mindful awareness, child-like curiosity and an open attitude to play will be the key to see the real gifts of the present moment. That is why they call it THE PRESENT, right? During this workshop you will be able to experience mindfulness and learn small tips on how to practice nature connection in your everyday urbanized life. We invite you to come disconnected from all of your devices, in order to connect more in the physical reality. (Thousands of scientific research, underlines the healing power of Nature: lowering stress hormones, reducing blood pressure and heart rate, and improving the balance of the autonomic nervous system.)

**note** Setting of the workshop will be outdoor, at Kopaszi Gát. We would meet on the venue and walk together along the Danube, as a silent walking meditation to leave the bustling city behind and arrive to the quiet park. The walk is approximately 15 minutes.

In case of rain, the workshop will take place as scheduled. Please bring waterproof clothing with you.

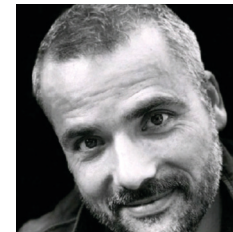
## SATURDAY, 11 JULY 2026 / AFTERNOON

THEMATIC SESSION  
TS11  
16.00 – 17.00

Language: English  
Translation: German, French, Italian

Gömb Aula

Session Chair: Yaël LIEBKIND



## Staying Human in a digital world

Loïc DECOSTER – Alain GIANNATTASIO

Engineers with extensive experience in IT and project management, also trained in coaching and Human Systems Engineering. They support teams and organizations in improving efficiency by fostering safe and effective working environments. Switzerland

**abstract** With the rapid growth of digital tools and artificial intelligence across all sectors, this lecture offers an opportunity to explore real-life scenarios drawn from a variety of fields. Its aim is to examine how standardization, uniform responses, and both cognitive and digital biases can shape — and sometimes distort — human interaction. Using a four-pillar framework (sovereignty, integrity, sobriety, and resilience), participants will identify areas of vulnerability, reflect on the strengths and limitations of digital tools in their daily work, and consider where human judgment must remain central when supporting help seeker. The lecture will rely on simple cases to show how digital tools can strengthen — or weaken — the quality of listening, support, and human presence.

THEMATIC SESSION  
TS12  
16.00 – 17.00

Language: German  
Translation: Hungarian

Konferencia room

Session Chair: Michael GRUNDHOFF



## Würde bewahren – wenn Empathie nicht genug ist

Michael HILLENKAMP

Michael Hillenkamp (Germany) is an educator, theologian, supervisor, and psychotraumatologist with broad training in counselling, systemic and trauma-informed approaches. He has extensive experience in pastoral and clinical settings and currently works in private practice focused on relationship supervision and experiential training. Deutschland

**abstract Counseling as a Practice of Dignity Work** People experience dehumanization not only through open violence but also through what Hannah Arendt described as the “banality of evil.” She used this term to show how dehumanization can emerge when individuals suspend their moral judgment, dissolve responsibility into roles or procedures, and no longer recognize the other as an equal subject of dignity. In counseling practice, this dynamic appears whenever people are reduced to cases, roles, or functions. Dignity does not arise from declaration but from practice. It becomes visible where counselors consciously refuse to dehumanize the other, even in conflict, failure, or moral tension.

The lecture identifies concrete criteria of dignity-centered counseling and explores how counseling can protect shame, assume responsibility in contact, and resist reducing human beings to functional categories. In the age of digital assistance systems, dignity remains a fundamentally human practice that cannot be automated.

SUNDAY, 12 JULY 2026  
/ MORNING

# “How can human qualities and AI interact”

MAIN SESSION 5  
9.00 – 10.30

Language: English  
Translation: Hungarian, German, French, Italian

Gömb Aula

Session Chair: Mark MILTON

## The Social Contribution of TES



## Embracing Uncertainty: Building Individual and Collective Resilience to Navigate Change

**Stefania PASCUT**

WHO Healthy Cities Project Coordinator in Udine with over 15 years of experience in public administration and health promotion policy. She works on prevention and well-being programmes, active and healthy ageing, and sustainable urban health initiatives, collaborating with international WHO and EU networks. She also conducts research with the University of Udine on psychosocial well-being and preventive approaches to health across the lifespan. Italy

**abstract** Change is part of life. It happens continuously, to each of us: sometimes by choice, sometimes by necessity; sometimes as an opening, sometimes as a loss. We need tools to interpret the changing world, to understand our minds and our relationships, to orient ourselves in times of uncertainty. Hence the invitation to not fear change and to begin to inhabit it, not out of resignation, but by choice; not to simplify the world, but to learn to navigate its complexity with awareness, responsibility, and balance. Because the ability to embrace change - inside and outside of us - holds the possibility of growing as individuals and as a community.

Drawing on the reflections, evidence, and contributions of the 22nd IFOTES “Winds of Hope” Congress, Stefania Pascut has written the book “Embracing Uncertainty,” in which she analyzes resilience as a personal and collective skill: from the analysis of uncertainty to self-knowledge, from social relationships to the digital context, from artificial intelligence to the mind-body connection. An invitation not to fear the unpredictable, but to actively engage with it.



## Why is listening provided by volunteers? The strength of volunteering in listening

**Pascal KAYAERT**

Director of Télé-Accueil Brussels and a social worker, adult educator, and team supervisor in the psychosocial field. He focuses on prevention, the therapeutic role of speech, and support for professionals in helping relationships, and regularly contributes to public discussions and events on these topics. Belgium

**abstract** The study conducted by the Social Observatory of Télé-Accueil Brussels is based on testimonies from volunteer listeners and a theoretical analysis aimed at understanding why this volunteer commitment is so essential. Listening provided by volunteers offers a unique space for free expression, free from therapeutic injunctions or expectations of concrete outcomes. Trained and carefully supervised, these citizens embody genuine solidarity that helps free speech in the face of social crises, supports people through hardship, and combats isolation. Unlike a professional’s therapeutic approach, which focuses on diagnosis, structured follow-up, and long-term goals for change, volunteer listening values the present moment, unconditional acceptance, and the strengthening of the social fabric. The complementarity between listening provided by citizen volunteers and the professional support network is invaluable: the therapist guides toward deep transformation, while the volunteer offers immediate, citizen-based support.



## TES providing an overview of Emotional Health in Europe

**Marcello MORTILLARO**

Head of Applied Research at the Swiss Center for Affective Sciences (University of Geneva), specializing in emotions, emotional intelligence, and evidence-based approaches to organizational development. He has authored over 50 scientific publications and developed the Geneva Emotional Competence Test, widely used in professional selection and training. His current work focuses on emotional competencies in the workplace and research methodologies for the helping professions. Switzerland



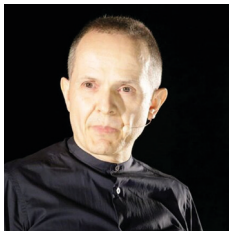
**Michele COSTOLA**

Associate Professor of Economics at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and a research affiliate at the University of Reading and the Leibniz Institute SAFE. His research focuses on financial economics, including market dynamics, sentiment analysis, ESG risks, and sustainable finance, with an emphasis on integrating environmental and geopolitical factors into financial risk assessment. Italy

**abstract** For more than 60 years, IFOTES member helplines have responded to the emotional needs of European citizens, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The information and data collected - through approximately 4 million phone calls annually, as well as 350,000 chats and emails - are representative of the emotional well-being of the population. These data illustrate the evolution of social well-being across the continent and provide valuable insights for predicting mental health trends.

**MAIN SESSION 6**  
11.00 – 11.45Language: English  
Translation: Hungarian, German, French, Italian

Gömb Aula

Session Chair: **Melinda MEDGYASZAI****The human touch in a digital world: how can Human Qualities and AI interact****The human touch in a digital world****Melinda MEDGYASZAI**  
**Luca CHITTARO**  
**Birgit KNATZ**  
**Mark MILTON**  
**Michael READING**

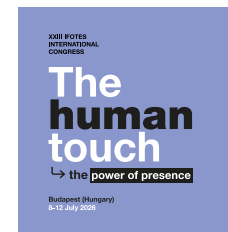
**abstract** Following a thorough exploration of the challenges and opportunities presented by AI, a panel of speakers will be invited to distill the collective insights emerging from the congress. In an era of rapid technological change, where support systems must evolve alongside innovation, panellists will share key perspectives and practical strategies for navigating this complex landscape, particularly within helping relationships and emotional support services.

Ultimately, our goal is simple: to ensure that, even as technology advances, the human touch remains at the heart of what we do.

**Congress Closing****Yaël LIEBKIND**

Member of the congress Scientific Committee, Switzerland

**abstract** The closing speech will briefly bring together some of the main themes and reflections that emerged throughout the event. It will offer a concluding perspective on the evolving role of helplines and emotional support services within a rapidly changing social and technological context, highlighting future challenges and opportunities for supporting meaningful human connection in contemporary society.

**Poster Sessions**

IFOTES Members

Throughout the congress days, a dedicated poster area will be set up in the South Building of ELTE University, showcasing projects, innovations, and best practices, developed in recent years by IFOTES members.

Presenters: Telefonseelsorge Österreich, Austria; Télé-Accueil Bruxelles, Belgium; Tele-Onthaal, Belgium; Telefonhilfe 108, Belgium; Alevitische Gemeinde Deutschland K.d.ö.R., Germany; TelefonSeelsorge Deutschland, Germany; Sekasin Kollektiivi, Finland; LESZ, Hungary; ARTESS, Italy; Telefono Amico Italia, Italy; Sopotnik Klic upanja, Slovenia; ASITES, Spain; Esperança en línia – Fundació Ajuda i Esperança, Barcelona, Spain; 143.ch - Die Dargebotene Hand, Switzerland.

Two sessions are scheduled to offer participants the opportunity to learn more about the displayed projects directly from the TES members presenting them, in an informal space for exchange and discussion where participants can engage in dialogue, share experiences, and draw inspiration from the work of other TES.

Poster sessions will be held on

- Thursday, July 9th, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM
- Saturday, July 11th, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM

# The **human** touch

↳ the **power of presence**

SOCIAL  
AND CULTURAL  
PROGRAMME

# The human touch

↳ the power of presence SOCIAL PROGRAMME

**Wednesday 8 July**

**at 19.00**

**at ELTE University  
– Gömb Aula (North Building)**

**Welcome Reception**  
**Coming together and reconnecting**

Guests will be welcomed by the organizers and local authorities. An aperitif will be offered.

Free entry for the congress participants wearing the congress badge.



**Thursday 9 July**

**at 9:00**

**at ELTE University  
– Gömb Aula + Konferencia Room  
(North Building)**

**Opening Ceremony**  
**Beginning the congress journey**

Opening speeches and live performance.



Júlia Kubinyi is a folk singer, who has received Hungary's title of 'Young Master of Folk Arts' in 2012; then the Junior Prima award in 2013. Many people know her as one of the finalists in the 2012 Páva Folk Talent Contest broadcast on Hungarian National Television. Hungarian folk music and folk dance have been part of her everyday life since childhood. She has contributed her vocal talents to numerous recordings, Hungarian folk song competitions, and local and international festivals in Europe and overseas.

Since 2008, she is the dedicated singer of Dívő Ensemble, although she sings regularly as a guest-artist with many Hungarian folk music formations. Starting from 2021, she has been the solo singer of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble.

**Saturday 11 July**  
**from 20.00 to 24.00**

**at ELTE University – Catering area  
and Gömb Aula (North Building)**

**Farewell Evening**  
**An evening of music, friendship  
and celebration**

On the evening of Saturday, 11 July, the Gömb Aula of ELTE University will transform into a lively dance hall with live music. The event will begin with a standing buffet dinner in the Catering Area (level -1), featuring a selection of delicious dishes accompanied by wine, beer, and soft drinks. After dinner, guests will be invited to the dance floor, where the celebration will continue until midnight.

Standing **dinner h. 20.00**  
followed by **dancing h. 21.30**  
Admission upon presentation  
of the pre-booked voucher.

**Saturday 11 July**

**at 18.30**

**at Mindenki Temploma**  
**1105 Budapest, Cserkesz u. 7-9**

**Ecumenical prayer**

Ecumenical prayer led by representatives of different religious traditions, with songs and readings in the congress languages. A moment of reflection and shared humanity, inspired by the values of fraternity, mutual understanding, peace, and solidarity among people of different cultures and beliefs.

Public transport from/to ELTE University: from the campus, take Tram 4 or 6 towards the city centre and get off at **Harminkettesek tere** (4 stops). From the tram stop, you will see a McDonald's on the corner of the square. The bus stop is just a few metres away, on the same side as the McDonald's. From there, take **Bus 9** and get off at **Liget tér**. IFOTES volunteers will be available there to guide or accompany you to the church. **Mindenki Temploma** is only a few minutes' walk from the bus stop.



The MADARAK Band will perform live for the occasion. Through more than 4,000 performances over the years, they have built their reputation on one core commitment: ensuring that every audience leaves with a truly memorable experience — always delivered through 100% live music, without compromise. Their work has been recognised with the Emerton Award (2001) and the Arany Nyíl Award (2004). In addition to their extensive presence at Hungarian corporate and private events, they were honoured to represent Hungarian culture at the International Hungarian Ball in Brussels during the Hungarian EU Presidency — a milestone reflecting the prestige of the events at which they are invited to perform.



# The human touch

↳ the power of presence

## CULTURAL PROGRAMME

During the congress, participants will have the chance to enjoy a range of cultural activities and experiences, taking place at the congress venues and online. The programme will include photography exhibitions, performances, and other activities that offer opportunities to meet people and share experiences outside the scientific sessions. All the following activities are accessible without reservation.

## EXHIBITIONS



8 July 2026 from 15.00 to 19.00

### Riversaver exhibition and workshop

In the outdoor area of ELTE University

During on-site registration on 8 July, from 15:00 to 19:00, participants are warmly invited to visit the **RiverSaver Exhibition**. The environmental mission of the PET Cup focuses on cleaning rivers, floodplains, and riparian areas, while also raising awareness about river pollution. Through interactive activities, participants will discover the challenges involved in river clean-up, as well as the solutions and responses developed to address them.

A **mini plastic workshop** is also part of the exhibition, offering participants the opportunity to actively engage in the recycling process and create a key-chain from recycled plastic bottle caps.

Whether you are waiting to complete your registration or have already checked in, this is a great opportunity to discover the work of RiverSaver, an organisation dedicated to environmental protection and sustainability. We invite you to stop by, explore, and take part.



From 8 to 12 July 2026

### Survivors

A photo exhibition by Andrea Di Biagio

ELTE University – South Building – Exhibition Area

Meeting with the author:

Saturday 11 July at 12.30 (Exhibition area)



Who are the survivors? They are those who have lost a dear one, a relative or a friend due to a suicidal gesture.

The purpose of this photographic project is to join the Suicide Prevention Awareness Campaign with a narrative based on images which focus on the Survivor's side. An evocative storytelling in which the timeline unfolds between PRESENT (portrait photo of the survivor), PAST (photo souvenir of the suicidal person) and ETERNITY (object of memory), thanks to an extremely intimate and sincere language.

**Andrea Di Biagio** is an Italian professional photographer specializing in documentary, editorial, and commercial photography. His work is distinguished by a narrative and authentic approach, attentive to people, contexts, and the stories that run through them. Through clean and impactful images, he combines aesthetic sensitivity with technical rigor, building visual projects capable of communicating identity, emotions, and complex content. He collaborates with private clients, companies, institutions, and media outlets, and also works on events, portraits, and commissioned projects. For Andrea, photography is a tool for storytelling, observation, and connection with reality.



### The Human Touch Perspectives on social wellbeing

Online exhibition with paintings, photos, drawings, short movies  
Project by ARTESS, 2023-2024



The Human Touch is a kind and friendly way of treating people that makes them feel good.

Individuals and society need, now more than ever, to experience this human characteristic, rediscovering trust in social relationships.

The artworks in this online exhibition propose the themes of dialogue and a healthy approach to relationships, in a social perspective characterized by attention, respect, kindness and the recognition of each person in their uniqueness and value as a human being.

You are invited to explore the exhibition online whenever you have a free moment during the congress—maybe during a break or while enjoying a relaxing moment in the university park.

The **virtual catalogue** of the exhibition is available on: <https://thehumantouch.art-ess.org>.

## CULTURAL INITIATIVES



## Embracing Uncertainty: Insights for Engaging with the Major Changes of Our Time

Project by ARTESS, 2025-2026

Presentation by Stefania Pascut:

Main Session Sunday 12 at 9.00

artess

Association for Research and Training on Emotional Support Skills



A common thread connects the last IFOTES 2023 congress in Lignano “Winds of Hope” and the 2026 congress in Budapest “The Human Touch”: the shared reflection on how individuals and communities can respond to the profound changes shaping contemporary society.

Built on the outcome of the congress “Winds of Hope” and dedicated to the theme of change and rapid transformations, the project “Embracing Uncertainty – Ideas for Engaging with the Major Changes of Our Time” represents a collective effort to explore uncertainty not only as a challenge but also as an opportunity to strengthen both individual and collective resilience.

Its outcomes include the book “*Embracing Uncertainty: Building Individual and Collective Resilience to Navigate Change*” and the manifesto “*10 Ideas for Uncertain Times*” created by under-30 Italian students to offer insights and perspectives to face the uncertainty that characterizes our present times.

<https://www.art-ess.org>

**The manifesto *10 Ideas for Uncertain Times* will be available in the congress languages and distributed to all participants.**

### ELTE Campus

#### Faces and voices of the IFOTES community

From 8 to 12 July 2026



Throughout the congress, filmmaker Stefano Giacomuzzi will capture key moments of the event in Budapest and move among participants to gather impressions and reflections on the congress experience, as well as on how they believe the human touch can be preserved in everyday life and in the listening and emotional support services provided by helplines.

Join in and contribute your voice to help build this collective story of the IFOTES community!

**Stefano GIACOMUZZI** is a film director who discovered documentary filmmaking early on as a way to explore unusual lives and extraordinary stories. His first works were short documentaries portraying remarkable individuals, from the world’s largest collector of toy robots to the inventor of the smallest camera ever made.

At nineteen, he began producing his first feature film, *Under the Cold Stars* (Sotto le stelle fredde), winner of the Bellaria Film Festival. After graduating from the Bournemouth Film School and training at the international research center Fabrica, he directed *Pozzis*, *Samarkand* (Pozzis, Samarcanda), a documentary following the journey of an elderly motorcyclist toward the heart of Asia. The film received recognition at several national and international festivals.



# The human touch

↳ the power of presence

GUIDED TOURS

Three guided tours are scheduled for Friday 10 July 2026:

1. **Bus tour: Budapest city and Parliament**
2. **Bus tour: Etyek vine region**
3. **Danube River Cruise to Szentendre**

All tours will depart from the ELTE campus. The meeting points for each tour will be located in the outdoor area of the North Building and will be clearly marked in three separate areas.

For all programs, we kindly ask participants to be at the designated **meeting points at 14:00**, bringing with them a printed copy of the voucher received with their booking confirmation. This is necessary, as vouchers will be checked on site. Please note that groups may depart at different times.

Some tours may also be booked on site, subject to availability.

### Budapest City Guided Tour with Parliament Visit



**Meeting at 14:00**  
**between the North Building and the South Building of ELTE University**  
**Departure as participants arrive and vouchers are checked**  
**Return around 18:00-18:30**

Step into the heart of **Hungary’s capital** and experience the magic of **Budapest’s most iconic sights**. Stroll through the historic **Castle District**, marvel at the grandeur of **Heroes’ Square**, and enjoy exclusive access to Europe’s largest **Parliament building**—home to the dazzling Hungarian Crown Jewels.

#### Programme information

Three buses will depart. The first group enters the Parliament at 15:15, the second at 15:30, and the third at 16:15. The first two groups go directly to the Parliament, while the third group visits Heroes’ Square first. The visit to Parliament will last approximately 1 hour.

There will be no walking tour during the program; the buses will stop at a few key locations for a brief stop and photo opportunities. The programme is expected to conclude between 18:00 and 18:30.

## Etyek Wine Tasting Guided Tour with 3-Course Meal



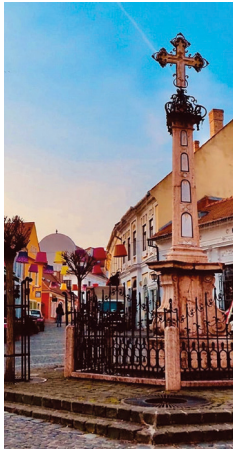
**Meeting at 14:00**  
**near the entrance of the North Building of Elte University**  
**Departure as participants arrive and vouchers are checked**  
**Return around 19:30**

Sip and savor your way through Hungary's charming Etyek wine region. This **unforgettable tasting experience** includes visits to family-run wine cellars, rich samples of local varietals, and a delicious 3-course meal made from regional specialties—all set against rolling vineyard views.

### Programme information

The bus will depart from ELTE campus as soon as all participants have arrived and vouchers have been checked. Travel time: approx. 50 minutes. Upon arrival, there will be a wine tasting followed by an early dinner. Afterward, we'll take a short walk around the area and visit additional sights. Return departure: 18:30. Arrival in Budapest is expected around 19:30.

## Szentendre Half-Day Guided Cruise



**Meeting at 14:00**  
**at the side entrance of the North Building of ELTE University,**  
**on the Danube side**  
**Departure at 15:00**  
**Return around 20:00**

Glide down the Danube on a scenic **river cruise** to Szentendre, where a guided town tour awaits. Enjoy free time to explore its charm before returning by boat with a drink in hand - coffee, soft drinks, and snacks included - for a laid-back journey back to Budapest.

### Programme information

The Infopark marina is about a 10-minute walk away from ELTE campus. The boat trip to Szentendre takes about 1.5 hours. Participants will receive a welcome drink and sweet pastries during the trip. There will be free time in Szentendre. Return departure: 18:30. On the return trip, we will serve savory pastries, coffee, and tea. The programme is expected to end around 20:00 in Budapest.



## SERVICES AT THE CONGRESS VENUE ELTE

### INFO POINT

An info point is located in the North Building of ELTE University at the entrance. IFOTES and LESZ staff and volunteers are ready to provide information and assist the congress participants

**Volunteers wearing red IFOTES shirts are also available to assist you. Please do not hesitate to ask them for information or support.**

### COFFEE BREAKS

Coffee breaks will be served in two different areas of the congress:

- North Building at the lower ground floor in the catering area (all congress days)
- South Building on the ground floor in the poster area (Thursday afternoon, Friday and Saturday)

To avoid crowds, conference participants are invited to access the coffee break in the area which is closest to their following activity (see in the program).

### LUNCH BREAKS

Lunch breaks are scheduled every day from 12.30 to 14.30. There is the possibility to purchase a **lunch box at ELTE** in the catering area, choosing from 3 types of main courses including 1 vegan option. Salad and dessert will also be available every day. Prices: Main course: €10; Salad or dessert: €5. Payment can be made by cash or card. If you would prefer to have a pleasant lunch in the surrounding area Bartók Béla Boulevard might be the perfect place. Located just two tram stops and a short walk from the venue, it offers a more local and creative atmosphere than the tourist-heavy city centre. Over the years, the boulevard has become one of Budapest's cultural hubs, full of cafés, bistros, bars, galleries, and independent restaurants.

### VENDING MACHINES

Several vending machines are available at the congress venue where participants can buy drinks and snacks.

### WATER DISPENSERS

Water dispensers are available throughout the congress areas at ELTE. Participants may refill their bottles and flasks free of charge from the water stations provided in the congress spaces.

### WIFI

Free Wi-Fi is available throughout ELTE University. Simply connect to the network.

### ACCESSIBILITY

The university follows the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. The regulations have been outlined in key policy documents of the University. ELTE Lágymányosi Campus has three faculties (Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Sciences and Faculty of Informatics) in two building (North and South Buildings) which are both barrier free and accessible.

The University puts great emphasis on providing direct and indirect services to ensure equal opportunity, accessibility and offer support for those who have disability or chronic illness.  
(Resources: <https://www.elte.hu/en/equal>)

- SECURITY** During the event no large objects or bags/packages should be brought into the congress halls. Any unsupervised bag or luggage will be removed immediately.
- LUGGAGE STORAGE** A luggage storage service managed by LESZ volunteers will be available near the entrance of the ELTE North Building.
- LOST & FOUND** A lost and found desk will be available in the ELTE North Building and managed by LESZ volunteers.
- FIRST AID** During the congress, a first aid service will be available at ELTE University, in the North Building, close to the entrance.
- ROOM OF SILENCE and MEDITATION** A Room for Silence and Meditation will be available in the ELTE North Building (Level -1) from 08:00 to 17:00 throughout the Congress. Participants are welcome to use this space for quiet reflection, prayer, or meditation. We kindly ask everyone to respect the peaceful atmosphere and maintain silence while in the room.
- PARKING AREA** Congress participants may park cars, coaches, and bicycles free of charge in the ELTE campus parking area located between the North and South Buildings along the river. The parking lot has 300 free parking spaces for congress participants.

**SAFETY INFORMATION**  
(ELTE University Prevention and Protection service)



**GENERAL RULES OF CONDUCT IN THE CASE OF EVACUATION**

- Do not place backpacks, bags or other personal belonging in such a way as to obstruct exit.
- At the alarm signal, follow the instructions given by the emergency workers present in the hall and follow the escape signs;
- Stay calm and don't panic;
- Go to the gathering points.
- Do not touch anything during the evacuation.

**FIRE**

- Do not use elevators in case of fire!
- At the alarm signal, all people present must evacuate the building following the escape routes and the directives of the emergency workers.
- Evacuation is to the open air, to the designated assembly point.
- You may deviate from this if the route is impassable due to smoke or fire.
- If it is not possible to evacuate outside because of impediments due to flames, smoke and strong heat, stay where you are, close the access door completely, apply wet cloths to the cracks, open the windows and - without exposing yourself too much outside - draw the attention of rescuers.
- Gathering in front of the building is prohibited, as it hinders the fire department's ability to respond and carry out their duties, and may result in personal injury in the event of damage to the building (such as broken glass).



**SERVICES IN BUDAPEST**

**BUDAPEST IN JULY**

You can discover Margaret Island, the Danube promenade, the area around St. Stephen's Basilica, Bartók Béla Boulevard, outdoor classical or theatre performances, wine bars, and rooftop terraces with views. These offer a relaxed atmosphere, good food and wine, beautiful scenery, and plenty of opportunities to experience local culture. For a more culture-focused visit, you can enjoy world-class performances at the Hungarian State Opera House, as well as classical concerts, ballet, and theatre productions in some of Budapest's most beautiful historic venues. The city's renowned museums, including the Hungarian National Museum and Museum of Fine Arts, offer excellent exhibitions showcasing Hungary's rich history, art, and cultural heritage. Those who are looking for a livelier side of Budapest can explore the city's famous ruin bars in the Jewish Quarter, where unique venues combine nightlife, street art, live music, and local culture in former historic buildings. Further information can be requested at your hotel and at the Tourist office.

**TOURIST INFO**

Tourist information office called Budapestinfo Városháza Park serves as a visitor information center situated in Városháza Park which is in walking distance from Deák Ferenc square, the biggest metro hub in the city. This facility aims to enhance the visitor experience by offering insights into local attractions, events, and cultural activities.

**Budapestinfo Városháza Park**

1052 Budapest, Városháza park, Károly körút  
Open: 9 am – 19 pm Monday to Sunday  
[info@budapestbrand.hu](mailto:info@budapestbrand.hu)  
+36 1 486 3300

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

BKK – Budapesti Közlekedési Központ operates Budapest's public transport network, including metro lines, trams, buses, trolleybuses, night services, and some suburban railway connections. People can use BKK services by purchasing either paper tickets and passes from ticket machines or digital tickets through the BudapestGO mobile app. BKK offers several ticket options, including single tickets, time-based tickets, daily travelcards available in both digital and traditional paper formats. Timetables and route information can be found on the official BKK website and in the BudapestGO trip planner, which provides live departure and arrival data. The BudapestGO app allows passengers to plan journeys with real-time information, buy tickets and passes, and receive service updates in one place.

**People over the age of 65 and children under the age of 14** (with ID or Passport) can travel free of charge on public transport.

**SPECIAL OFFER FOR THE CONGRESS PARTICIPANTS**

Congress participants can benefit from a special all-inclusive flat rate of 14 Euro for all five congress days, covering unlimited travel on the entire BKK network (airport shuttle bus excluded). This 5-day pass can be collected (if already booked) and purchased at the IFOTES secretariat desk.

**BIKE SHARING AND BIKE RENTAL**

There are 2 bike sharing companies and several long-term rental options are available

**MOL Bubi** is operated by the city (BKK), very cheap and widely available. They have more than 200 stations across and 5000 bikes (including 1000 e-bikes) in Budapest. The bikes work via the MOL Bubi app. More information on <https://molbubi.hu/en/>

**Manfred** is a private company which offers 2000 regular bikes and 500 e-bikes. They might be more comfortable and more flexible with pickup/drop-off points depending on app availability. Their service is more expensive than MOL Bubi but still affordable. <https://manfred.mobi/?lang=en>

**Budapest Bike rental:** bicycles can be rented by Hungarian or foreign citizens over 18, with an identity document. <https://budapestbikerental.hu/>

**TAXI**

Taxi fares in Budapest are regulated, so prices are generally the same across Bolt, Uber, and traditional taxi companies. The airport–city center trip usually costs 26–35 euros, depending on traffic.

**App taxis (Bolt / Uber)**  
Book via Uber and Bolt app (Bolt also accepts phone bookings +36 1 444 5154). Fares follow the official Budapest taxi tariff.

**Regular taxis**  
The official airport taxi provider is Főtaxi, available directly outside the terminals with no advance booking required. Phone: +36 1 222 2222

**RESTAURANTS**

You may choose to explore the cosmopolitan Pest side of the city, where you will find everything from elegant Hungarian restaurants to lively international bistros, wine bars, and rooftop venues, or head to the Bartók Béla Boulevard area, located just two tram stops and a short walk from the venue. Over the years, Bartók Béla Boulevard has evolved into Budapest's "cultural boulevard" — full of cafés, bistros, bars, galleries, and independent restaurants — offering a more local and creative atmosphere than the tourist-heavy city centre.

**SPECIAL OFFER FOR CONGRESS PARTICIPANTS**

**Urban Betyár Restaurant & Ethnographic Visitor Center**  
% discount for IFOTES congress participants.  
20 Valid from 7 to 13 July.  
The discount applies exclusively to à la carte orders for guests making individual reservations via <https://urbanbetyar.com/>. Please include the note "IFOTES CONGRESS" when booking.

**The First Strudel House – Budapest** (next to Urban Betyar)  
20% discount for IFOTES congress participants.  
Valid from 7 to 13 July.  
The discount applies exclusively to à la carte orders for guests making individual reservations via <https://reteshaz.com/>. Please include the note "IFOTES CONGRESS" when booking.

# The human touch

↳ the power of presence

**GENERAL INFORMATION****ACCOMPANYING PERSONS**

Accompanying persons cannot attend the scientific sessions, unless they register, but are entitled to take part in the cultural and social events under the same conditions as those to congress participants.

**PHOTOS AND FILMS**

By participating in the congress, attendees agree that photos and film shoots during the congress can be used for advertising and publication on social media.

**PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA**

All personal data provided by participants will be used exclusively for the organization and functioning of the congress.

**PASSPORTS AND VISAS**

Hungary is a signatory to the 1995 Schengen Agreement. Visitors from EU countries (and citizens of Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein) can enter Hungary with a valid national ID card. Visitors from other countries must have a valid passport. For more information, please contact the nearest Hungarian Embassy, Consulate or Travel agent in advance. For more information visit: <https://konzinfo.mfa.gov.hu/en>.

**INSURANCE AND LIABILITY**

Participants are advised to arrange health and accident insurance before travelling to the Congress. The Congress Organisers and the Congress Secretariat shall be exempted from all liability in respect of any loss, damage, injury, accident, delay or inconvenience to any person, his/her luggage or any other property for any reason whatsoever.

**CURRENCY BANKS EXCHANGE**

Hungary's national monetary unit is the Forint (HUF). At the moment (June 2026) the Hungarian Forint is changed to 0.00286 EUR. Currency exchange is provided by banks and exchange agencies. Banks are open Monday to Friday from 8 / 8:30 to 16:00 / 17:00.

**ATM (Automatic Teller Machine)**

ATMs are located all around the city. They can also be used for cash advances on major credit cards such as MasterCard or VISA.

**CREDIT CARDS**

Major credit cards are accepted in most hotels, stores and restaurants.

**ELECTRIC POWER**

The electrical current in Hungary is 230 Volts 50 Hz. You may need an adapter to connect your devices to power outlets. The type F plug used in Hungary is compatible with C and E electrical plugs (C and F are the most commonly used plugs in European countries).

**CLIMATE**

In July, the average temperature in Budapest ranges between 18 and 28 °C. July is usually the hottest and driest month of the year in Hungary.

**SMOKING POLICY**

Smoking is not allowed in any indoor public or open to the public venue. It also forbidden in public transport stops and within five meters of any business entrance.

**EMERGENCY NUMBER**

For any emergency, dial 112

STEERING  
COMMITTEE



**Sonja Karrer**  
Switzerland  
IFOTES president  
Chair of the Committee



**Diana Rucli**  
Italy  
IFOTES Director  
Congress coordinator



**Eva Brandisz**  
Hungary  
LESZ Manager of International Relations



**Réka Szente**  
Hungary  
LESZ Project manager on site

SCIENTIFIC  
COMMITTEE



**Barbara Jenko**  
Austria  
Manager TS Klagenfurt am Wörthersee  
IFOTES International Committee member



**Yaël Liebkind**  
Switzerland  
Director of 143.ch la Main Tendue Genève  
IFOTES International Committee member



**Melinda Medgyaszai**  
Hungary  
Doctor and psychotherapist  
LESZ member



**Bettina Schwab**  
Germany  
Manager TS Berlin (DE)  
IFOTES International Committee member



**Mit Van Paesschen**  
Belgium  
Representative of Belgian TES Confederation  
IFOTES International Committee member



**Diana Rucli**  
Italy  
IFOTES Director  
Congress coordinator

CONGRESS  
TEAM  
IFOTES



**Diana Rucli**  
Italy  
IFOTES Director  
Congress coordinator



**Elena MISDARIIS**  
Italy  
IFOTES Communication



**Alessia CECCONI**  
Italy  
IFOTES Administration



**Giorgia PONTONI**  
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IFOTES Scientific Secretariat



**Réka Szente**  
Hungary  
LESZ Project manager on site



**Anna SZÁNTÓ**  
Hungary  
LESZ Volunteer  
Coordinator of volunteers



**Gyöngyi BOGÁRDI**  
Hungary  
LESZ Volunteer  
Congress Transfers

**CONGRESS  
TEAM  
LESZ**



**Katalin HANKÓ**  
Hungary  
LESZ Volunteer  
Congress Hospitality



**Nóra BERKÓ**  
Hungary  
LESZ Volunteer  
Congress Logistics



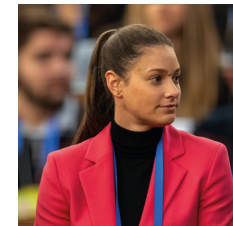
**Gioia MALABOTTA**  
Italy  
PCO Key Congressi  
Congress Registration



**Elisa DE PELLEGRIN**  
Italy  
PCO Key Congressi  
Congress Registration



**Monica JETZIN**  
Hungary  
Trivent PCO Agency  
Social Activities Desk



**Réka MOLNÁR**  
Hungary  
Trivent PCO Agency  
Social Activities Desk

**PROFESSIONAL  
CONGRESS  
ORGANISERS**

## THANKS

Our sincere thanks go to all the individuals and organisations who contributed their expertise and supported us in the preparation of this congress.

We are especially grateful to the many people who freely and generously shared their time, knowledge, professional expertise, and talents – speakers, workshop leaders, interpreters, chairs, volunteers, and numerous other contributors. Their commitment, generosity, and belief in the value of human connection have made this congress possible.

## SPEAKERS

Jaques BESSON, Switzerland – Ildikó BOLDIZSÁR, Hungary – Luca CHITTARO, Italy – Olivier CLERC, France – Christian CORRO', Italy – Michele COSTOLA, Italy – Loïc DECOSTER, Switzerland – Damir DEL MONTE, Germany – Roberto DE VOGLI, Italy – Daniel DOR, Israel – Laura FORMENTINI, Italy/Spain – Martin FRANKEN, Germany – Alain GIANNATTASIO, Switzerland – Michael HILLENKAMP, Germany – Lode LAUWAERT, Belgium – Melinda MEDGYASZAI, Hungary – Mark MILTON, Switzerland – Marcello MORTILLARO, Switzerland – Calvin NILES, United Kingdom – Pascal KAYAERT, Belgium – Birgit KNATZ, Germany – Noémi KONDOROSI, Hungary – Stefania PASCUT, Italy – Dóra PERCZEL-FORINTOS, Hungary – Michael READING, USA – Stefan SCHUMACHER, Germany – Laura TOCMACOV, Switzerland – Tim VANHOVE, Belgium – Robert WERNIGG, Hungary – Stéphane WITH-AUGUSTIN, Switzerland.

## WORKSHOP LEADERS

Tom ALBRECHT, Switzerland – Melanie ALTER, Switzerland – Mèlina BLANC, Switzerland – Karin BOCHENEK, Germany – Aurélie BOGAERTS, Belgium – Cornelia BREU, Germany – Stephan BÜCHENBACHER, Switzerland – Bence BUZA, Hungary – Olivier CLERC, France – Cathy CLIFT, Germany – Christian CORRO', Italy – Ulrike DAHME, Germany – Shiri DANIELS, Israel – Elodie DEDERDING, Switzerland – Andrea DI BIAGIO, Italy – Bindu FERNANDES, Switzerland – Tina FREITAG, Germany – Franz FRITZ, Germany – Martin FRANKEN, Germany – Gabriela GITZELMANN, Switzerland – Ursula GROOS, Germany – Monica GÜTERMANN, Switzerland – Diana JOSS, Switzerland – Carl HAGEMANN, Germany – Ute HANSBERG, Germany – Melinda HAL, Hungary – Eva HAUSSMANN, Switzerland – Matthias HERREN, Switzerland – Karin HEYMANN, Germany – Cornelia HULLA, Austria – Sonja KARRER, Switzerland – Susanne KISS, Switzerland – Birgit KNATZ, Germany – Angelika KOBAL, Ukraine – Minka KOECHLI, Switzerland – Katharina KÜHNE, Germany – Jessica LEVY, Luxembourg – Yaël LIEBKIND, Switzerland – Hilde LILLESTØL, Norway – Adrienn LUKÁCS, Hungary – Melinda MEDGYASZAI, Hungary – Bettina SCHWAB, Germany – Zsuzsi MENKŐ, Hungary – Edgar MÜLLER, Germany – Uwe MÜLLER, Germany – Elke PRINZ, Austria – Catherine REINBOLD, Belgium – Barbara RODE, Germany – Daniela ROHLER, Switzerland – Ivana RUDAZ, Switzerland – Matthias O. SCHNEIDER, Germany – Imran SAGIR, Germany – Barbara SCHÖPF, Germany – Norbert SCHÖPF, Germany – Irma SIMO', Romania – Inger STØLAN HYMER, Norway – Ludger STORCH, Germany – Eszter SZABO, Hungary – Marc Olivier THOMA, Germany – Orsolya TÖRÖK, Ukraine – Ingrid VANDERHOEVEN, Belgium – Robert ZAHND, Switzerland – Ulrike ZELLER, Germany.

## CHAIRS OF THE CONGRESS SESSIONS

Michael GRUNDHOFF, Germany – Jaap JAKOBS, The Netherlands – Barbara JENKO, Austria – Yaël LIEBKIND, Switzerland – Melinda MEDGYASZAY, Hungary – Mark MILTON, Switzerland – Bettina SCHWAB, Germany – Mit VAN PAESSCHEN, Belgium.

## POSTER PRESENTERS

Iris CORPAS, Spain; Carine DEBEER, Belgium; Cristina DÍAZ, Spain; Myriam DOTHÉE, Belgium; Melanie HÄUSLER, Switzerland; Laura HERNÁNDEZ, Spain; Antonio IOVIENO, Italy; Barbara JENKO, Austria; Pascal KAYAERT, Belgium; Monica PETRA, Italy; Natalia RESTREPO, Spain; Sigrid ROOBROECK, Belgium; Anna SZANTO, Hungary; Nada TRŽAN-HERMAN, Slovenia; Melek ŞAHIN, Germany; Shachida USHUROVA, Belgium; Ingrid VANDERHOEVEN, Belgium; Montse VILLALOBOS, Spain; Tobias WALKLING, Germany.

## INTERPRETERS

Special thanks to Gabriele WENNEMER and her team of professional interpreters: Ina BREUING, Danjela BRÜCKNER, Emanuela CARDETTA, Donata MORI, Gabriella EBNER, Peter SCHMIDT, Astrid SCHWEDLER, Judit TISZAVOLGYI, Cinzia TURRINI and Anna ZECCHINI.

Thanks to their work, all congress participants have the opportunity to follow the lectures in five languages. We are sincerely grateful to this outstanding team of professionals, who have generously provided interpreting services to IFOTES congresses for many years, making an invaluable contribution to international dialogue and understanding.

## VOLUNTEERS

**IFOTES volunteers** Michael GRUNDHOFF, Germany – Jaap JAKOBS, The Netherlands – Belinda ARNOLD, Germany – Francesca FEDRIZZI and Brian CHAMBOULEYRON, Italy – Antonella BUJATTI, Daniela COSTANTINI, Meri MORTAL, Claudia PLOS, Letizia SCIALINO from the Association Voci Fuoricampo, Udine, Italy – All TES members who collaborated in many ways.

**LESZ President** Erika Dudás and Hungarian Volunteers Andrea CSÁTI, Anikó SZATMÁRI, Anna SZÁNTÓ, Csilla CSESZNIK, Gabriella SÜLE, Gyöngyi BOGÁRDI, Ágnes CSEH, Ákos ZSÁKAI, Árpád TÓTH, Beatrix SCHMUCZER, Enikő NAGY, Enikő TELMAN, Ilona KÖDÖBÖCZ-GERZSENYI, Katalin HANKÓ, Lilla IVÁCSON, Mária FÖRISNÉ OLÁH, Mihály HÓDOS, Mihály KÖRTVÉLYESI, Nóra BERKÓ, Nóra Zsuzsa GÁCSI, Orsolya TÖRÖK, Petra HORVÁTH-GÖGÖS, Tamás GESZTELYI, Timea RÁCZ-BERECZ, Tünde TÓTH, Vanda VARGA, Zoé Júlia SZABÓ, Zsuzsa BORBATH, Zsuzsanna IVÁNYI, Zsuzsanna OLASZ.

## PROFESSIONALS AND COLLABORATORS

Virág ERDEI and Balázs MAJZIK – Public Administration support, Hungary  
Gioia MALABOTTA and Elisa DE PELLEGRIN – PCO Key Congressi, Italy  
Monika JETZIN and Reka MOLNÁR – PCO Trivent, Hungary  
Emil GARAB – ELTE Kancellária, Hungary  
József ELZER and Ottó CSEH – EL-VISION Kft, Hungary  
Maria CAPOZZI e Simone BARTOCCI – Ontime, Italy  
Beáta BARCSA – ELTE Szolgáltató Kft, Hungary  
József KRIZSÁN – Rendezvény Garden Kft., Hungary  
Veronica DURIÁVIG – Brand Designer, Italy  
Giorgio MANCIN and Martina GREGORI – Tipografia Pellegrini il Cerchio, Italy  
Tiziana SABADELLI e Paolo MELLERIO – EnBilab, congress website  
Stefano GIACOMUZZI – Video maker, Italy  
Zsombor SZEKERES – Photographer, Hungary  
Andrea DI BIAGIO – Photographer, Italy  
Sandro RUCLI – Exhibition designer, Italy  
Csaba BALOGH – Vitaminbox Kft., Hungary  
Éva KÁLMÁN-GELEGONYA – Rétesbolt  
Szabolcs CZÁR – Szivárvány Aqua Kft., Hungary  
András RIZMAJER – Hungarian Brewery  
Katalin VÉSZITY, RiverSaver  
Klára BARANYI-HORVÁTH – B&B Hotel

### IFOTES

IFOTES was founded in 1967 and brings together 26 associations and national federations of Telephone Emergency Services (TES) offering emotional support in a non-judgemental and anonymous way, mainly via telephone, email, and chat, across 18 countries.

Its mission is:

- to promote the exchange of experiences among its national members by organizing congresses, training sessions and seminars that contribute to the quality of the services offered by its members;
- to support all efforts to create telephone emergency service centres and national associations worldwide;
- to promote international coordination among helplines and the sharing of best practice.

Its members are national associations of Telephone Emergency Service Centres (TES) that offer emotional support, immediately accessible to anyone experiencing loneliness, psychological crisis, or suicidal thoughts. The service is provided by trained volunteers who offer callers a genuine human relationship, available mostly 24 hours a day. Support is strictly confidential, free of charge, and accessible to everyone regardless of age, gender, or faith. IFOTES believes that, together with its members, it can play an effective role in promoting emotional health in communities and schools, drawing on almost 60 years of experience in offering empathy through listening. Every three years, IFOTES organizes an international congress aimed at exchanging experiences and training in the field of emotional and mental health, while improving the quality of the services offered by its members. [www.ifotes.org](http://www.ifotes.org).

### LESZ

Hungary's first telephone emergency service was established in Debrecen in 1970, in keeping with the objectives of suicide prevention, crisis intervention, and the promotion of mental health. By 2026, voluntary service is provided through a network of 30 member services in Hungary and beyond its borders, all operating in accordance with the principles of anonymity, voluntarism, and confidentiality. Each year, the organisation's volunteers respond to approximately 200,000 calls and 8,000 emails, contributing to more than 100,000 hours of voluntary service. This free and continuously available support is provided around the clock via the 116-123 helpline and for 120 hours each week through the 06 80 810600 support line. In Transylvania, Subcarpathia, and Upper Hungary, as well as through protestant member services, additional telephone lines are also available for callers seeking support. The calls reflect wide range of difficulties experienced across society, including emotional and relationship-related challenges, generational conflicts, changes in health status, and existential hardship. Through its referral function, the organisation also facilitates access to personal support contacts, including qualified professionals. Hungarian-language calls are answered by nearly 550 volunteers serving in Hungarian-language services throughout the Carpathian Basin. Emphasis is placed on shared professional forums, training programmes, conferences, and close professional cooperation. As a result of ongoing organisational development, every service is supported by a professional lead—such as a psychologist, mental health specialist, or psychiatrist—who assists the operational manager. The training of new volunteers is preceded by a careful selection process; following successful examination and a period of supervised observation, volunteers may begin conducting supportive conversations independently. Continuous professional development is fostered through case discussions, further training, supervision, and professional events held at various levels. <https://sos116-123.hu/>

### IFOTES

c/o ARTESS

via Argentina 16,

33100 Udine – Italy

Tel +39 0432 202076

[info@ifotes.org](mailto:info@ifotes.org)

<https://congress2026.ifotes.org>

### LESZ

Magyar Lelki Elsősegély Telefonszolgálatok Szövetsége

1027, Budapest Hungary

Frankel Leó út 5. fsz. 1.

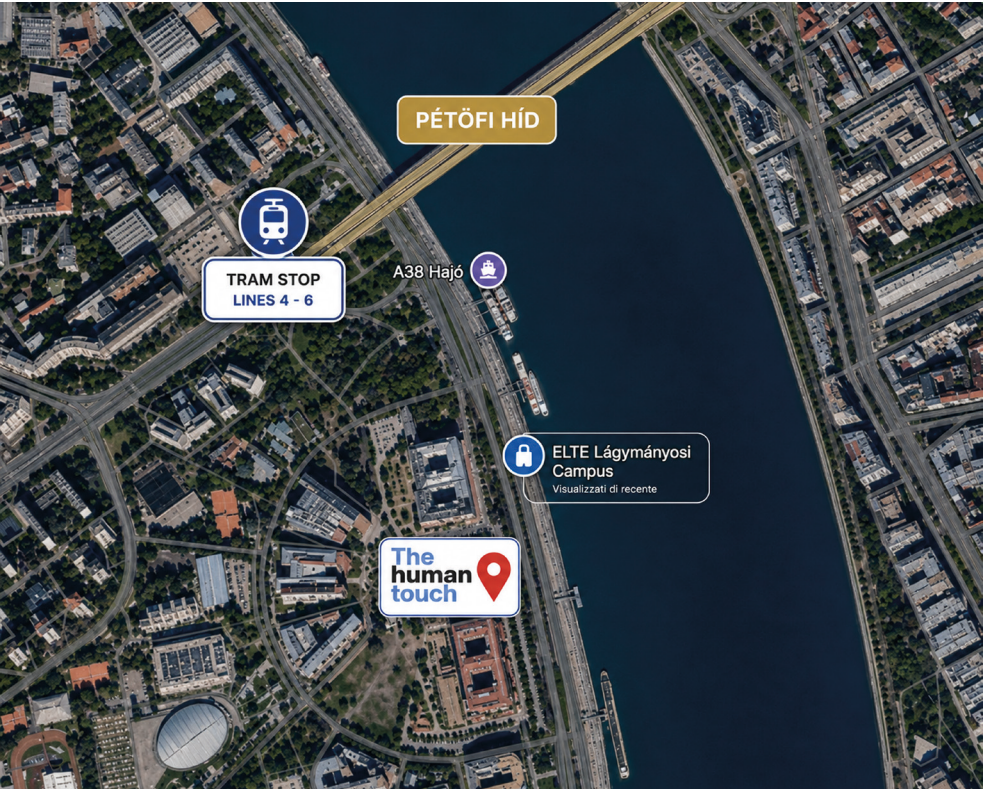
[lesziroda@gmail.com](mailto:lesziroda@gmail.com)

<https://sos116-123.hu/>

# The human touch

↳ the power of presence THE CONGRESS VENUE

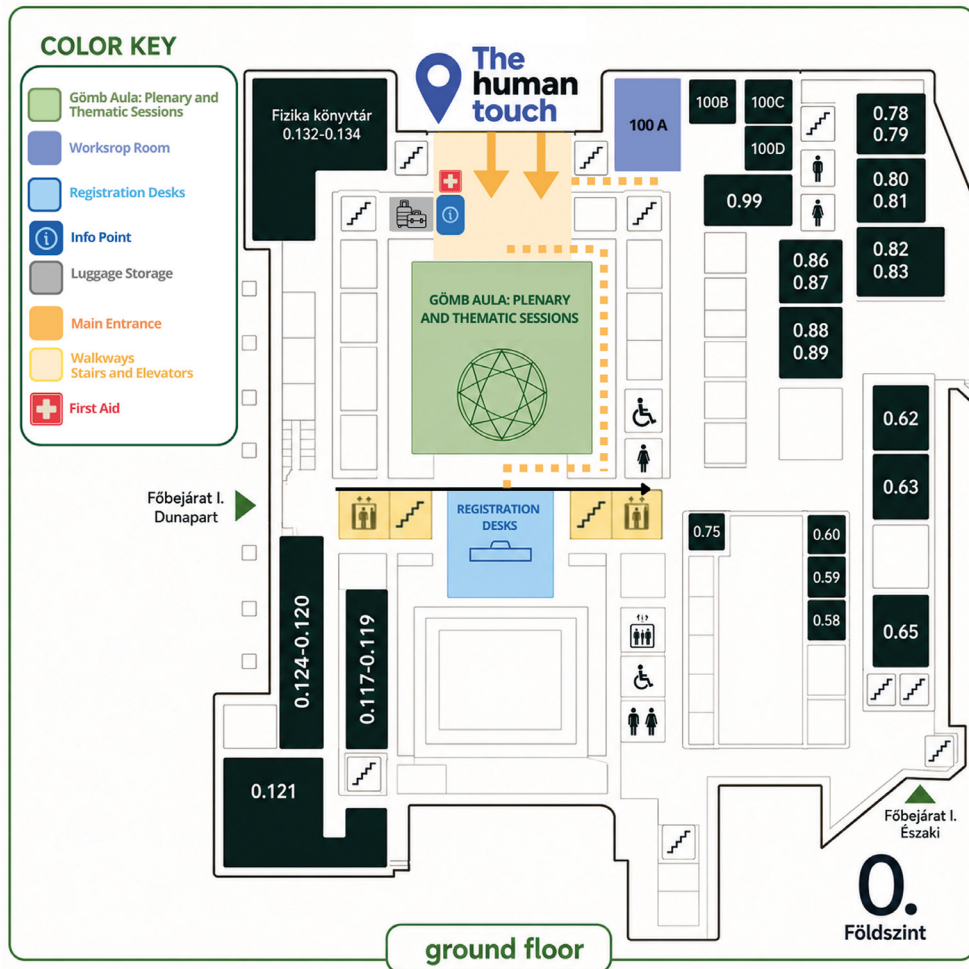
## ELTE LÁGYMÁNYOSI CAMPUS IN BUDAPEST BUDAPEST, PÁZMÁNY PÉTER STNY. 1/C, 1117 HUNGARY



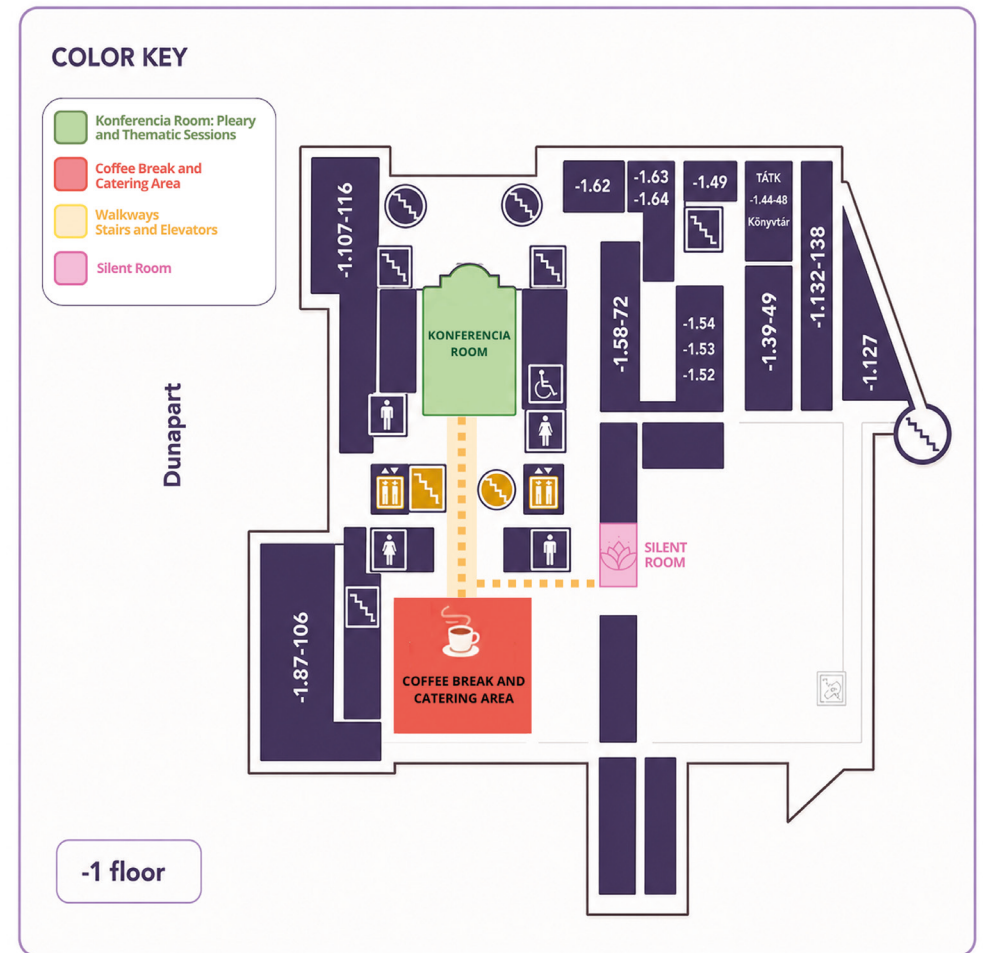
## ELTE CAMPUS – CONGRESS VENUE



**NORTH BUILDING**  
Indoor Map – Ground floor



**NORTH BUILDING**  
Indoor Map – Level -1



**SOUTH BUILDING**  
Indoor Map – Ground floor



**SOUTH BUILDING**  
Indoor Map – Level -1



For further information, please visit the Congress website  
<https://congress2026.ifotes.org>

**Contacts during the congress week**

**KEY CONGRESSI**

**Congress registration**  
**registration@ifotes.org**

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**Congress Secretariat**  
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