

BETTER TOGETHER

Discovering Joy in Company

INITIATIVE



Talk to that one

**Platonic Matching in the Metropolregion
Rhein Neckar**

Participant Information

Summary

"Loneliness can hurt. However, it is also a wake-up call to take action.

Two concrete groups with higher than usual loneliness rates are beginning tertiary education students and job starters and young professionals coming to a new city or indeed a new country.

While in loneliness literature various workshop and training formats have been evaluated and found effective to some degrees, the simple act of sponsoring, nudging or creating connections for people has been done less so. One reason might be that obtaining ethics approval to essentially run a non-commercial matching service might be hard to get.

Still, helping people develop connections simply by connecting them is too good an opportunity to pass up and not to try, and so this project - „talk to that one“ will run a regional pilot with an accompanying validation.

For further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Christian Langkamp

Initiative GemEinsamkeit

This is the english document for instructions and FAQ

Version 1.00 Monat 2025-07

Quick overview - What it is and isn't What You Need to Know (Whether You're a Student or an Administrator)

- This is not a dating app. It is a project focused on helping people meet platonically, for one good conversation.
- We use your answers to suggest 1:1 conversation partners. You only receive matches—not an open list, not swiping.
- The algorithm is open, non-commercial, and auditable. No data is ever sold. No one sees your profile.
- Participation is optional, anonymous, and designed to give you control at every step.
- It is developed by researchers and practitioners in the loneliness field—not by a startup or venture-backed company.
- Currently it is 18+ only

How it works in 7 steps

1. Get the invitation link or flyer from your university, international office, or peer group.
2. Fill out a long profile questionnaire (45 minutes). This includes your interests, humor, conversational style, and what kind of friendship you're looking for.
3. Complete a few filter questions on age, language, and match openness.
4. Wait for your match. Once a cohort is full, matches are generated in batches. This usually happens within 1-2 weeks of your sign-up.
5. Receive an email with one personal match and a short intro or suggestion.
6. Meet for one conversation. Arrange the location yourself—ideally somewhere calm, public, and neutral.
7. (Optional) Give feedback. After your meeting, you can tell us how it went, so we can improve the system.

Social Norms and Participant safety

No tracing is possible, we don't know any of the people on the platform. They could be out for dates, scams, frauds, ... so be careful with your personal data and what you divulge before the first meetup. Best not give out your surname.

Ideally make a profile that has some photos, or something so that the person can at least get an image of you. However the "compatibility" vouch comes from the connection score. The open question is whether you want to provide a "vouched or verified profile. This is a profile from a platform with some communication mechanism as well as a verification mechanism. Couchsurfing is here the stereotypical prototype, but Internations or Meetup work just the same. The main point here is that it makes it costly for you to misbehave, as the other person could report you given your communication data trail and get your profile banned.

Ideally once you are matched meet up in a neutral location as soon as possible without any superficial telegram correspondence. The time spent for information gained ratio on social media is just off the charts worse than the gut feeling impression you get within 5 or 10 min of conversation.

As much as we aim to provide good matches, it is not a guarantee. Please do not think of this as a guaranteed perfect friend. Think of it as a statistical improvement, from a 5 % likelihood to the random person in the cafeteria you talk to to a say 25 % likelihood of a good match given that another friend recommends that person as being a good match. This will still mean that there will be some people with whom the chemistry is not right, where you don't hit it off, without anything being wrong with you or them.

Please reflect however after the meetup what went well, what the recommendation might have gotten right about you or them, and maybe how you may also wish to adjust your search pattern.

FAQ

- Is this a **dating app**? - **No, it is explicitly not !**
However we would absolutely love it if people here become friends first and then fall in love too after a while!
- Who sees my profile? - **No one**, it is just used to calculate matches.
- Is it **free**? **Yes**
- Will it stay free? "Yes with a but".
The goal is to keep it free for at least a year and at least until 1000 or 2000 participants. *If* it goes beyond it, further investments into harder data protection, workflows, possibly an app might be necessary and then also triggering a review of the funding model.
- Is there **customer support**? - No, essentially there are simply no resources for independent and individual support. Questions and complaints can be written to talktothatone@initiative-gemeinsamkeit.de but at this point we have no feeling for that part how fast and comprehensive we can follow up.
- Is there **safety support**? - we can delete profiles of people whom there are complaints about, but as we know nothing of the people behind them, there is little we can do beyond that. This part is outsourced to the social enforcement features of the platforms like Meetup.com, Nebenan.de, Couchsurfing and Internations.
- **Why the many questions ?** Is that really necessary ?
Yes, in part it is. One of the issues of the Bumble BFF etc. is that it is so easy and casual, that there is no real buy in. Here, once you have made the investment of sitting through the profile questionnaire, you should be motivated to get something out of it, and simply for that point and curiosity follow up and show up on your first platonic date.
The second thing is that the level of detail this permits really allows to select people on the likelihood to **bond on a specific mutually shared passion**, of which there are a lot of candidates to be checked on.
-

FAQ

- What about people **younger than 18**
Currently no people younger than 18 are permitted to participate in this programme for unclear additional GDPR and safeguarding requirements. We are procuring legal advice over time to clarify this and permit this at least for the exceptional case of early University starters.
- What about people **not in the initial core target group**
We are definitely not excluding anyone for age etc., but it will just take a longer time until the right number of people are in the overall matching group. Thus we do not actively encourage participation given the 45 min initial questionnaire until we see the likelihood of getting to 60 participants for the locality and wider demographic within a course of two months. If an association or municipality organisation believes that they can en bulk motivate their members to join, then we would love to hear from you.

The key thing is the likelihood of getting about **60 participants in loosely the same demographic** (same age group within 10-20 years, same part of the city or same institution) for it to make sense and avoid early disappointment.

-

About us

The Initiative GemEinsamkeit is a small NGO with the aim of creating a knowledge and networking platform for practical, applied work on loneliness. Globally and in Germany, there are already numerous projects that have helped lonely people and fostered sociability and high-quality friendships. Through building our network and ongoing discussions with our partners, we aim to:

1. Collect promising, ready-to-use approaches.
2. Discuss them in suitable online and in-person formats.
3. Provide professional support for their implementation in pilot projects and gather feedback.
4. Aggregate these approaches into a comprehensible, publicly accessible, and continuously evolving collection (Open Educational Resource).
5. Distribute finalized ready-to-use approaches within our network.

We do not conduct our own scientific research, as scientific research and societal analysis are already comprehensively and excellently carried out by the European research network "Loneliness in Europe" and the Kompetenznetzwerk Einsamkeit mandated by the Federal Government / BMFSJ through 2026 . Our role is to support the third and final step: integrating analytical results with practical experiences and "packaging" them into ready-to-use guidelines. In this way, we aim to contribute to addressing loneliness in Germany.

We currently finance our activities through thank-you donations from institutions that use our templates free of charge, speaking fees for online or in-person presentations on workplace loneliness and private contributions of the team. Otherwise, we strive to operate with a minimal footprint.

If you or your company have the opportunity to make a direct, unrestricted donation, we recommend recipients such as the telephone hotlines like krisenchat or Mutes or any of the new initiatives addressing youth loneliness in response to the latest statistics published in 2025.