



Case Study – Ela's (name changed) experience with ICOS wellbeing sessions:

Ela is a 69-year old woman from Poland living in the UK. Despite facing mobility challenges due to her disability, she has found a renewed sense of purpose, joy, and connection through regular participation in wellbeing sessions. Ela has expressed deep appreciation for these sessions, describing them as a “very positive experience with creative people from various corners of Poland”. One of the most meaningful aspects for her is the opportunity to speak Polish to other women and share her thoughts freely, something she is unable to do at home, where she speaks her husband's language.

This linguistic and cultural connection has been instrumental in helping her feel less isolated. She describes the wellbeing sessions as an escape from isolation and everyday burdens, offering her a space to forget, even momentarily, about her physical limitations. “For a while, I can detach from my disability and be fully present with others who understand me” Ela shares.

Over time, Ela has built a strong network of friends through the sessions and is proud of the many meaningful friendships, she has developed. Being one of the oldest participants, she often receives support and care from the group, which makes her feel valued and looked after. She particularly enjoys the sessions led by Sabina, whom she describes as “a very charismatic person with exceptional self-confidence, empathy, and communication skills.” According to Ela, Sabina's individual approach and openness to others; problems create a nurturing and inspiring environment. Ela finds Sabina's influence to be powerful, saying: “She inspires and influences others in such a natural way - that's why I enjoy every minute of these sessions.”

Among her favorite activities are meditation - “a beautiful detachment from reality” and creative sessions like drawing. While her mobility limits her participation in yoga, she still appreciates the calm and balance it brings. Ela believes that these sessions can be life-changing for others: “They're perfect for people who don't believe in themselves and want to change something in their lives. These sessions are open for everyone”.

Ela's experience highlights the value of wellbeing sessions that bring people together and offer a sense of belonging. The right kind of support can help people reconnect, grow, and feel less alone. For Ela, these sessions have expanded her horizons and deepened her knowledge.

