

## **Co-creating safe emotional and psychological sharing spaces using collage as artistic expression.**

### **Chair BIO**

**Iulia UDREA** - licensed architect and co-founder of the Project A Zece Association based in Cluj, România. She has a license and master's degree from Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Nantes and her practice in Cluj since 2013. The Medisprof Cancer Center project initiated the collaboration with architect Mara Oprea, now her associate and friend. The two architects started the experimental 10+ Art Project in 2018, aiming to redesign the interior spaces at Medisprof, with the creative contribution of patients and caregivers. With over 10 years of architecture experience, she has designed mostly medical spaces, but also residential architecture and interior design.

### **FACILITATORS BIO:**

**Mara Oprea** - licensed architect and co-founder of *APA10* and *10+ ArtProject* based in Cluj-Napoca, România. With a Master's Degree from Leeds Beckett University, UK, she started her private practice in 2016 and attained 8-years of experience designing houses, oncology clinics, and interiors for bookstores, offices, apartments, and medical spaces. In 2018 she stepped towards including art and artistic creation as a mundane activity where the walls of medical layouts became canvases for outpatients to express themselves. Alongside architect Iulia Udrea and a team of psychologists and artists, she co-facilitates online and face-to-face support groups for oncological patients and caregivers.

**Camelia Moraru** - licensed psychologist since 1996, worked as a trainer and facilitator for groups in universities, companies, and clinics. She joined the Medisprof Cancer Center in 2019 as a psychotherapist and was since then part of the 10+ ArtProject co-designing and facilitating alongside Iulia Udrea, Mara Oprea, and artists online and face-to-face groups for oncological patients and caregivers.

**Camelia TOMA** - oncological patient, Romanian teacher, and drama workshop coordinator for teenagers and at-risk groups (detainees). She took part as a patient in various face-to-face groups at Medisprof Cancer Center (MCC) and is part of the Volunteering Patients Initiative counseling patients that are starting their treatment at MCC.

**Cristina Labo (NiZNAiU')** - visual artist living and working in Cluj-Napoca, România. Through the years, she's been looking for ways to put art in the service of people, exploring many different media and techniques. Although now her main focus is live graphic facilitation, she has a strong interest in art as a therapeutic tool. In this field, she develops and implements creative exercises meant to improve mental health in therapy groups. In the last 3 years, she worked together with 10+ ArtProject to create Art in a Box, sharing her liberating creative experience with collage.

**Learning objectives** - To identify the benefits of a multidisciplinary community that includes not only medical staff and patients but also artists and architects. They are driven by the idea of providing emotional support and normalizing the patient's perception on the oncological process. Likewise, participants have an opportunity to work with their emotions regarding cancer by creatively portraying them amongst a group with diverse viewpoints. Another goal is to explore a more in-depth perspective of outpatients in relation to the role of the community in cancer care (including medical staff, caregivers, friends, and other interested parties).

**WORKSHOP Description:** This workshop addresses patients, clinicians, and multidisciplinary teams from the oncology field interested in broadening and deepening their communication skills by co-creating art that illustrates their journey. The participants will explore the connection between imaginative and emotional expression.

Our workshop sets about a new way of addressing medical spaces and artistic encounters between staff and patients while constructing a safe psychological environment for emotion sharing and depicting through collage. Collage as a form of art is a tool able to re-shape, emplace and mend a new reality more powerful than the initial pieces.

The architects in our team try to re-frame the perspective on medical spaces as impersonal places of detached decisions and standardized procedures. The artist helps the patients and caregivers explore their support system in connection to nature and time, through an exercise in a process guided by the psychologist.

Our initiative is part of an online and face-to-face monthly program that offers staff and patients the possibility to interact through art and co-design spaces in hospitals. Results from a qualitative analysis will be presented, identifying themes and perspectives through visual representations of the oncological experience, both from participants and facilitators point of view.



*(Collage done by a patient during the first online support group)*