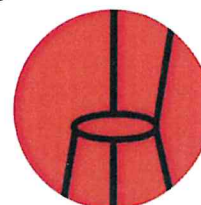


## "I ADD MY CHAIR TO THE CIRCLE" Campaign



("DÁVÁM ŽIDLI DO KRUHU")

<http://davamzidlidokruhu.cz/>



The campaign, named "I Add My Chair To the Circle" ("Dávám židli do kruhu"), aims to fight against the fear of openly talking about mental illnesses and the prejudices around them, and, dare we say, help the people affected. The campaign was launched by students and teachers at the grammar school Gymnázium Evolution Jižní Město in Prague, Czech Republic ([www.gevo.cz/jiznimesto](http://www.gevo.cz/jiznimesto)). The main partner of this campaign is the Czech National Institute for Mental Health ([NUDZ](http://www.nudz.cz)) and its General Director, Prof. MUDr. Cyril Höschl, DrSc. FRCPsych, one of the most prominent psychiatrists in Europe.

The name of our campaign, and its main principle, is based around the idea of the chairs in a circle that can be seen during group therapies. We ask various people, from the most famous to the less well-known, to show their support and interest and **virtually join the circle by taking a picture with a chair and posting their photo with #iaddmychairtothecircle**, thereby joining other patients in their therapy. We want to show that there should be no fear of being mentally ill, or of people with mental illnesses.

So far, we have received support from a number of people including Prof. MUDr. Tomáš Zima, DrSc., MBA, Charles University Rector; Mons. Tomáš Holub, Bishop of Pilsen; Katerina Neumannova, Cross-country Olympic Winner; Jan Thompson, British Ambassador to the Czech Republic; and many others (<http://davamzidlidokruhu.cz/podporili-nas/>).

In 2017-18, students and teachers of Gymnázium Evolution wrote and performed their original musical, "Židle v kruhu" / "The Chair in the Circle". The musical takes place in a psychiatric hospital during a therapeutic session in the treatment of amnesia associated with the term "school". More than 100 students of Gymnázium Evolution had various roles and tasks in this project. The musical was performed several times at the Broadway Theatre in Prague and the whole profit, along with donations from contributors and companies, went to the Czech National Institute of Mental Health (NUDZ). We managed to donate more than 8 000 EUR.

In 2018, we helped to organize a **film festival** for the NUDZ, featuring movies about mental illnesses and people suffering from them. Donations and profits from the festival supported the NUDZ in sending Czech specialists to provide professional psychological help to people in war zones around the world, and in organizing training for local psychologists.

In 2017 the non-profit organization "Židle v kruhu" was set up to support the creation and running of more projects prepared by young people about mental health stigma in the Czech Republic. We would like to grow, and we would like to run the campaign not only in the Czech language but also in English, and support projects around all Europe. We believe that the more shared photos with chairs we gain via this virtual campaign, the more support we will get from our donors. All donations that we collect go to the support of projects about mental health. We managed to support successful projects by the amount of over 6 000 EUR in total within the last four calls for projects that we organized so far.

We would very much appreciate it if you could find the time to have your picture taken on or with any chair in any surrounding. The picture should reference the campaign name and can simply be posted on Instagram or Facebook or Twitter with the hashtag #iaddmychairtothecircle. We strongly believe that this will make our campaign much more visible and therefore much more successful.

Thank you very much in advance for your participation in our campaign!

In Prague on 11 January 2021 on behalf of all students participating in the campaign,

Matěj Bíža

Head of the Campaign, "I Add My Chair To the Circle"