

NEWSPAPER #3

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# NEURO DANCE

Dancing intervention to ameliorate the symptoms and promote the well-being of patients with Parkinson's Disease and related neurodegenerative Disorders



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

NeuroDance Wins Praise Across Borders, Participants Report Shared Gains Across Europe ..... 3

    More Than Movement ..... 3

    Challenges, But No Deal-Breakers ..... 4

    Ideas for the Future ..... 5

    A Programme Worth Repeating ..... 5

NeuroDance Train the Trainer 2.0: Olomouc Hosts European Dance Leaders for Parkinson’s Care ..... 6

    Listening, Learning, and Adapting..... 7

    From Theory to Practice—And Back Again ..... 8

    Cross-Border Collaboration..... 9

    Recognition and Celebration..... 9

When Movement Takes the Stage: NeuroDance Coordinator at TEDxLjubljana ..... 11

    Behind the Scenes of a Stumble..... 12

    Movement Before Thought ..... 12

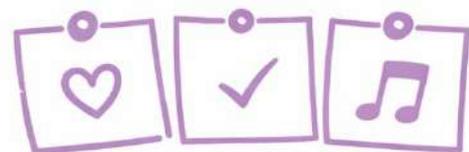
    Science with a Human Touch..... 13

NeuroDance in media ..... 14

Contact..... 15

## NEURODANCE WINS PRAISE ACROSS BORDERS, PARTICIPANTS REPORT SHARED GAINS ACROSS EUROPE

After completing the first cycle of the NeuroDance programme, participants in Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Germany were asked a simple but important question: *How did it feel to take part?* Their answers painted a clear and encouraging picture. Despite cultural differences and local specifics, the feedback across countries was remarkably similar—and overwhelmingly positive.



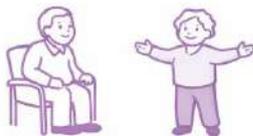
### Feedback

Many participants described the dance sessions as enjoyable, motivating, and socially enriching. Joy was the word most often repeated. People spoke about looking forward to the sessions, feeling uplifted by music and movement, and enjoying the chance to connect with others who understand the daily challenges of living with Parkinson's disease.

### More Than Movement



#### Social Connection



#### ♥ Acceptance ♥

Beyond enjoyment, participants highlighted a strong sense of social connection and acceptance. Dancing together helped break isolation and encouraged conversation, laughter, and mutual support. Slovenian participants especially valued the feeling of being accepted and supported within the group, while Czech participants often mentioned the emotional comfort of dancing with a partner. In Germany, participants rated improvements in mood, motivation, and social contact particularly highly.

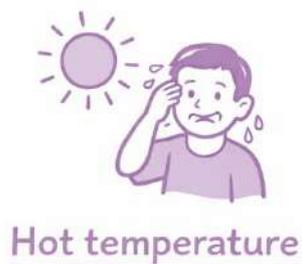
Many also noticed physical benefits. Improved balance, greater flexibility, smoother walking, and increased confidence in movement were frequently mentioned—especially in Slovenia and Germany. Some participants said they felt more willing to move in everyday life, a meaningful change for people who often struggle with hesitation or fear of falling.



### Challenges, But No Deal-Breakers

Of course, the feedback also pointed to challenges. Fatigue after sessions was common, as were difficulties with faster tempos, more complex steps, or turning movements. A few practical issues—such as warm temperatures in the Czech Republic, travel logistics in Slovenia, or crowded spaces in Germany—occasionally affected comfort.

Importantly, more serious concerns like balance problems, freezing episodes, or anxiety were mentioned only rarely. This suggests that the programme’s safety measures and inclusive teaching approach worked well, helping participants feel secure even when trying new movements.



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## Ideas for the Future

Participants also offered constructive suggestions. Across all countries, many asked for slower pacing, simpler or more repetitive steps, and materials for practicing at home, such as videos. Some Slovenian and Czech participants wished for more partner dancing, while others asked for more tango. In Germany, several participants suggested forming smaller groups to allow for even more individual attention.

When it came to favourite dances, there was clear agreement. Greek dances, country dances, partner work, rhythmic walking, and slow waltz patterns were consistently praised as accessible, enjoyable, and confidence-building. Participants appreciated dances with clear rhythm and structure, which made learning easier and movement feel more natural.

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## A Programme Worth Repeating

Perhaps the strongest message from the feedback was this: participants want more. Nearly everyone said they would recommend NeuroDance to others, and many expressed a strong desire to continue. Across all three countries, the programme was seen as beneficial, safe, and meaningful—not just as exercise, but as a source of motivation, connection, and joy.

The consistency of this feedback across countries shows that NeuroDance is not limited to one place or culture. Instead, it demonstrates that a well-designed, inclusive dance programme can speak a shared language of movement—one that brings people together and helps them feel better, both physically and emotionally.

## NEURODANCE TRAIN THE TRAINER 2.0: OLOMOUC HOSTS EUROPEAN DANCE LEADERS FOR PARKINSON'S CARE

From January 25 to 29, 2026, the city of Olomouc became the stage for a unique blend of dance, science, and care. The NeuroDance “Train the Trainer 2.0” workshop welcomed 47 participants from across Europe, ready to deepen their skills in teaching dance to people living with Parkinson’s disease. The event drew attention not only from the participants but also from Czech TV, radio, and newspapers, highlighting its growing public impact.



## Listening, Learning, and Adapting

Building on feedback from the inaugural 2025 workshop in Ljubljana, the Olomouc edition introduced important new elements. Most notably, following every session with Parkinson's patients, participants took part in structured reflection discussions. These post-session reflections gave future trainers the chance to analyze what happened during the class, raise awareness of the diverse symptoms faced by people with Parkinson's, and consider how best to support participants in real time.

"Listening to the participants' experiences helped us refine the workshop," explained one organizer. "We wanted our trainers to understand the human side of Parkinson's as deeply as the scientific side."





### From Theory to Practice—And Back Again

The five-day program combined lectures, hands-on exercises, and real-life dance sessions with people living with Parkinson's disease. Topics ranged from understanding the neurological aspects of Parkinson's to designing safe and engaging dance sessions to music choices and step variations.

Participants spent ample time practicing teaching techniques, both with and without Parkinson's patients, allowing them to adapt movements for safety and confidence. Special attention was paid to social engagement, ethical considerations, and fostering enjoyment during sessions—a holistic approach that merges science, pedagogy, and empathy.



## Cross-Border Collaboration

As in the first edition, Train the Trainer 2.0 strengthened connections between partner institutions across Europe. Daily meetings ensured that all participants and facilitators were aligned on teaching protocols, evidence-based practices, and the overall vision of NeuroDance.



## Recognition and Celebration

The workshop concluded with a Q&A session and a certification exam. Passing the exam demonstrated that participants were ready to bring NeuroDance classes to their communities, combining scientific understanding with practical teaching skills. The week ended with a diploma-awarding ceremony, celebrating the hard work, dedication, and collaborative spirit that defined the event. We can say with honor that **17 new trainers were certified as Dance Instructors for people with Parkinson's Disease.**

Train the Trainer 2.0 was more than a workshop—it was a demonstration of how feedback, reflection, and hands-on experience can transform education. With new trained instructors leaving Olomouc equipped to lead dance sessions for people with



Parkinson's disease, the NeuroDance project continues to expand its reach, one confident step at a time.



## WHEN MOVEMENT TAKES THE STAGE: NEURODANCE COORDINATOR AT TEDXLJUBLJANA

The prestigious Gallus Hall of Cankarjev dom set the scene for an inspiring moment this year, as Manca Peskar, coordinator of the international NeuroDance project, stepped onto the TEDx Ljubljana stage before an audience of 1,500. In a talk that was both scientifically grounded and deeply human, she invited the crowd to look at movement—not as something we take for granted, but as the very reason our brains exist.

Drawing inspiration from her work with people living with Parkinson’s disease, and from the insights gained through the NeuroDance project, Peskar explored how movement, balance, and brain function are inseparably connected. Her message was clear and striking: *“Why do we even have a brain? The answer is not thinking, not awareness, and not speech. The answer is movement.”*



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## Behind the Scenes of a Stumble

Taking the audience behind the scenes of a moment we all recognize—losing balance—Peskar revealed what happens in a fraction of a second when the body is suddenly at risk. She explained how the brain constantly predicts what will happen next, compares expectations with reality, and reacts instantly to keep us safe. What feels like a simple step or recovery is, in fact, the result of an extraordinarily fast and complex internal process.

Through everyday examples, she showed how the brain works as a predictive engine, constantly adjusting our movements based on sensory information. When something unexpected happens—a slip, a stumble, or a sudden change—the brain detects danger and immediately launches protective actions, often before we are even aware of it.

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## Movement Before Thought

One of the most powerful ideas of the talk challenged common assumptions about the brain. Peskar explained that our highest mental abilities—thinking, creativity, and imagination—did not evolve on their own. Instead, they grew out of a much more basic need: the need to move safely and efficiently through the world.

This perspective resonated strongly with her work in NeuroDance, where dance is used not only as physical activity, but as a way to stimulate the brain, support balance, and rebuild confidence in people with Parkinson's disease. Her talk highlighted how movement-based interventions can unlock hidden capacities of the brain, even in the presence of neurological challenges.

## Science with a Human Touch

Peskar's appearance at TEDx Ljubljana was more than a scientific lecture—it was a reminder of how closely science and everyday life are intertwined. By connecting cutting-edge neuroscience with real experiences from therapeutic dance and rehabilitation, she showed how understanding the brain can directly improve quality of life.

Her talk left the audience with a renewed appreciation for something we often overlook: every step we take, every movement we make, is guided by a brain whose primary mission is to keep us moving—and alive.



# NEURODANCE IN MEDIA

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