

Panel: **T. Schröder** (University of Nottingham)

The Personal is Professional. The influence of therapists' personal characteristics on their training, development and practice.

The importance of therapist factors for the outcomes of psychological therapies is by now well documented; the relationship between personal attributes and levels and trajectories of professional development is less well researched. The three papers in this panel represent different aspects of -the influence of personal variables on therapist development:

In the first paper, Djillali and collaborators focus on an important personal attribute, cultural embeddedness, in a cross-cultural comparison of attachment styles between 321 French and Algerian therapists across different stages of training and development. They further report associations with another important characteristic, interpersonal difficulties, drawing conclusions for training and supervision.

In the second paper, Schröder and colleagues report on the personal and professional motivations named by beginning trainee therapists for their choice of profession, drawing on qualitative data from the international longitudinal study conducted by the SPR special interest group on therapist training and development (SPRISTAD). The responses of 1200+ participants to a free-format question were coded by content analysis, based on an inductively constructed coding frame, to provide nuanced theoretical dimensions of reasons for embarking on training, and consensus ratings for use in statistical analysis.

In the final paper, de Condé, Zech and Willemsen report the findings of a survey of 282 therapists, enquiring about demographic and professional variables and personal attributes, and relating these to self-reported significant events that shaped individual professional development and clinical practice. Particular configurations of personal characteristics were predictive of significant events, differentiated by level of professional experience.

Paper in Panel: **S.Djillali, A. Plantade-Gipch and Y. deRoten**

Attachment styles and interpersonal problems: a comparative cross-cultural study between French and Algerian therapists

Aims: There is evidence that therapists' personality influences the therapeutic alliance and treatment outcomes. However, it remains unclear whether this influence manifests similarly across diverse cultural contexts. The current study had two main objectives. The first was to investigate the role of psychotherapists' cultural group (French, Algerian) on their attachment styles and interpersonal problems. The second was to examine the links between psychotherapists' attachment styles and their interpersonal problems.

Method: A total of N=321 participants, psychology students or psychologists, with a mean age of 33.4 years, with different levels of training in psychotherapy, completed the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale and the Interpersonal Problems Inventory.

Results: A significant effect of psychotherapists' cultural group (French, Algerian) on attachment (anxious or avoidant) was identified. A link between the attachment styles (anxious or avoidant) and the interpersonal problems has also been observed. A significant effect of the age of the psychotherapists on their attachment style and interpersonal problems was identified. Finally, 60.8% of the total variance of the data is explained by a latent dimension. Anxious attachment emerges as the most influential variable in explaining this dimension, followed by avoidant attachment.

Discussion: These results confirm the cultural difference in terms of attachment. These results allow us to consider interpersonal variables in training and supervision of therapists. This would involve helping therapist to develop more secure attachment styles and secure attachment to therapist, which in turn will help them to develop the alliance, maintain it and support therapeutic change particularly in cultural context.

Keywords: Attachment, interpersonal problems, therapist variables, therapeutic relationship, training to interpersonal skills.

Paper in Panel: **T. Schröder, J. Pirke, U. Willutzki, L. Hentschel and L. Nagel**

Reasons from the past, current conditions, and hopes for the future. Why people want to become psychotherapists.

Aim: Aspiring psychotherapists start their professional training for a variety of reasons, including personal and professional motives. Some of these may map onto the selection criteria of training institutions, others may be outside their scope. Having a clearer understanding of the range of motivations may help trainers to calibrate their expectations.

Methods: The 'Trainee Background Information Form' (TBIF) of the international longitudinal study on trainee development conducted by SPRISTAD, elicits individual motivations in free-text format. Responses had previously been explored in qualitative inductive analyses of subsamples, providing the basis for a coding frame that we employed to develop and iteratively refine a coding manual, generated in German (using translations by native speakers of responses in other languages) and translated into English. Using the manual, we performed a deductive content analysis of all 1200+ responses in the current data base.

Results: We present the final form of the manual, providing definitions and illustrative examples of its sub-categories and reporting reliabilities based on three coders. We provide descriptive statistics for consensus ratings of the entire sample and report selected associations with other TBIF variables.

Discussion: The manual provides an in-depth exploration of the reasons that trainees give for embarking on training and the dimensions that inform their decision. The results of the content analysis allow for the integration of qualitative material into the SPRISTAD database and for further quantitative investigations.

Keywords: Motivation for Training, Therapist Personal and Professional Development, SPRISTAD longitudinal study, Mixed-methods.

How do personal and professional characteristics predict the significant events that therapists report regarding their professional development?

Introduction: An increasing number of studies are exploring the professional development (PD) of therapists. In this study, we aim to integrate both therapists' characteristics and their development to better understand how therapists grow, what characteristics predict the significant events they identify in their lives, and how these factors influence their clinical practice and professional development.

Method: 282 participants completed an online questionnaire evaluating: (1) therapists' sociodemographic and professional characteristics, such as their age, gender, frequency of supervisions and personal therapy sessions, and level of training; (2) their level of reflective practice; (3) their level of congruence. Therapists were also asked to report (4) significant events that influenced their professional development; (5) to rate the appraisals of the most significant event of their PD (primary and secondary), and the frequency of their coping activities to deal with it (e.g., self-care activities, training, reading, personal therapy, substance use).

Results: Mixed-method results will be presented, exploring which types of therapists tend to report certain kinds of events, how they evaluate and cope with them.

Discussion: The results will be discussed in relation to previous studies on professional development (stages of development), particularly in differentiating between trainees and experienced therapists. These findings could help improve our understanding of how the person of the therapist develops over time through significant events.

Keywords: Personal and Professional Development, Person-of-the-therapist, Therapist Characteristics, Significant Events, Therapist Growth.