



## Research for Practitioners: Connecting Psychotherapy Practice and Research

A Conference of the Science and Research Committee of EAP

**16./17. February 2016, in Vienna**

Venue: Sigmund Freud Private University, Freudplatz 1, A-1020 Vienna

### ***Invited speakers:***

**Prof. Joachim Bauer, Germany**

"How the Modern Neurosciences Add to our Understanding of the Psyche"

**Prof. Chris Evans, UK:**

"How many ways can self-report change measurement help psychotherapy? Learning from CORE"

**Dr. Linda Finlay, UK:**

„Exploring human experience through relational-centred qualitative research“

**Prof. Omar Gelo, Italy and Austria:**

„Psychotherapy Research: Psychotherapy between practice and research“

**Prof. Volker Tschuschke, Germany**

„The wrong understanding of Evidence-Based research in psychotherapy: A plea for intensive process-outcome research in naturalistic studies“

### **Supporting organisations:**



## Program:

### Tuesday, 16. February

- 18:00 Peter Schulthess: Opening and welcoming  
 18:30 Joachim Bauer: How the Social Neurosciences Add to our Understanding of the Psyche  
 20:00 Discussion, Questions  
 20:20 Snack and drinks at SFU

### Wednesday, 17. February

- 09:00 Omar Gelo: Psychotherapy between practice and research  
 10:00 Discussion, Questions  
 10:30 Chris Evans: How many ways can self-report change measurement help psychotherapy? Learning from CORE  
 11:30 Discussion, Questions  
 12:00 – 13:30 Lunch break  
 13:30 Linda Finlay: Exploring human experience through relational-centred qualitative research  
 14:30 Discussion, Questions  
 15:00 Volker Tschuschke: The Wrong Understanding of Evidence-Based Research in Psychotherapy: A Plea for intensive Process-Outcome Research in Naturalistic Studies  
 16:00 Discussion, Questions  
 16:30 Discussion in groups of participants: Which designs look attractive to us? What kind of research project(s) might we (our association, institute) want to join?  
 17:15 Panel with representatives of the discussion groups and the presenters  
 18:00 Peter Schulthess: Closing

## Abstracts and authors:

### Joachim Bauer: "How the Modern Neurosciences Add to our Understanding of the Psyche"

**Abstract:** Neurobiological findings have led to a re- evaluation of the anthropological characteristics of humans, e.g. debunking the aggression instinct postulated by Sigmund Freud. The central goals towards which a human is – so to speak - „driven“ by the motivation system in his brain include interpersonal appreciation and social belonging. From the perspective of the human motivation systems, unprovoked aggression is not a “rewarding” endeavor for humans of average, i.e. non-psychopathological, mental health. But the neurobiological aggression circuitry – and the corresponding behavioral patterns – becomes activated when human beings are socially excluded or humiliated. Furthermore, modern neuroscience was able to elucidate the biological basis of what enables us humans to empathize with other humans and to understand their motives. The capacity to understand others quickly and intuitively and to feel what others feel results from on a neuronal resonance and simulation mechanism that is an intrinsic property of the mirror neurons system. On the other side, the ability to make elaborate assumptions about other people’s motives relies on so-called “self projection”, that is on the fact that networks in the ventral prefrontal cortex simultaneously code the internal representation of one’s own self as well as a projection of how other humans work. Finally, modern neuroscience has made us understand humans’ self-monitoring which results from an interaction between the prefrontal cortex and its subordinate brain areas.

Key words: motivation system, aggression system, mirror neurons, self, social cognition, Theory of Mind, education, self-monitoring/self-regulation, mindful life/living.

**Biography:** Prof. Dr. med. Joachim Bauer has specialized in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy and as well in Psychosomatic Medicine. He is an assistant medical director at the Psychosomatic Department of the University Hospital in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany. He has done a lot of research on the relation of brain and psyche. He has published more then 200 articles and 2 books. His latest book (2015): „Selbststeuerung - Die Wiederentdeckung des freien Willens“ (Self-monitoring: the re-discovery of the free will).

## **Chris Evans: "How many ways can self-report change measurement help psychotherapy? Learning from CORE"**

**Abstract:** The first grant for CORE (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation) was awarded in 1995. Twenty, now 21 years, have taught us all a lot about routine change measurement in psychotherapy. In many countries, certainly the UK, national funding is only available for services that use change measures, in other countries this may not yet have happened but no country is pouring money into psychotherapy services without wanting some pressures for "outcomes". The CORE system ([www.coresystemtrust.org.uk](http://www.coresystemtrust.org.uk)) provides a set of self-report measures of different lengths covering what many therapists and lay people think are sensible things that many would want to see change with therapy and was designed to be acceptable across all modalities of therapy. A derived measure (LD-CORE) exists for people with mild learning disabilities and another (YP-CORE) for adolescents and SCORE which allows family members to rate their families (as opposed to themselves) was based on CORE but designed for family therapies. All the measures are copyleft: you can't change them but you don't have to pay anything to print them or to incorporate them in software and good software exists to support use of the system ([www.coreims.co.uk](http://www.coreims.co.uk)). The CORE-OM and shortened forms have been translated very carefully into 25 languages including most European languages and that number is increasing.

However, this is like saying you have a great set of rooms in which to deliver therapy: it's the necessary structure but without therapy happening in the rooms you don't have anything yet. Similarly, ensuring that such a system can really help therapy needs the tools but is about having lively communication based in the tools. In this session Prof. Evans will cover what therapists can do to use such systems (CORE is not the only one but it's probably the best for Europe):

- 1) think of it as a very limited but very potentially powerful way to communicate about therapy without breaching confidentiality
- 2) think hard about what you want to use it to communicate and to whom
- 3) think hard about how that will fit with the therapies you deliver:
  - 3a) make it meaningful in terms of numbers of people you see: that's very different for long-term 5x a week with a tiny number of people from much short term work
  - 3b) make it meaningful in terms of the theory/modality of your therapy
  - 3c) make it meaningful to the people to whom you want to communicate, never forgetting where your clients/patients, colleagues, institutions and the EAP are in that.

**Biography:** Professor Evans started training in psychiatry in 1984 and immediately aimed to specialise in psychotherapy. He is a Consultant Medical Psychotherapist in East London Foundation NHS Trust working in a secondary care psychotherapy service and has worked in high secure forensic settings as well as community services. He has three psychotherapy trainings: the Royal College training which included some CBT and systemic work but was mainly in individual psychodynamic/analytic work, the London Institute of Group Analysis training and an advanced family/systemic training from the Tavistock and University of East London. He has always divided his working time about 50:50 between clinical work and research and is a co-author of the CORE instruments and trustee of CORE System Trust, a non-profit organisation which holds the copyright on the instruments. He has published over 110 peer-reviewed papers.

## **Linda Finlay: 'Exploring human experience through relational-centred qualitative research'**

**Abstract:** Relational-centred research is a general approach to qualitative research which mirrors therapy in that it explicitly uses reflexive, embodied, existential-phenomenological relationality to explore human experience. I will consider four core relational processes: presence, embodied empathy, intersubjectivity and reflexivity. A concrete example from different research studies will be offered to illustrate each. I aim to show how in the spirit of openness and unknowing curiosity, the data created in the embodied, dialogical encounter forms the basis of reflection on both self and other. The transformative power of such research is the way it offers individuals opportunities to be authentically witnessed and to 'give voice' to their experience. As each touches - and is touched by - the other, new possibilities are opened up for both researcher and researched to make sense of the experience being explored. Such research evokes what it means to be human; it resonates, challenges, and can inspire new understandings.

**Biography:** Linda Finlay is an relational-centred, existential Integrative Psychotherapist (UKCP registered) and she teaches psychology at the Open University, UK. She also supervises students' doctoral research and teaches qualitative research methodology in institutions across Europe including for the new Masters programme at the Gestalt Psychotherapy Training Institute Malta. Her research interest is in applying hermeneutic, reflexive-relational phenomenological approaches to exploring the lived experience of disability and trauma. She has published widely including two research orientated books: 'Phenomenology for therapists' and 'Relational-centred research for psychotherapists' (co-authored with Ken Evans). Her latest book published by Wiley September 2015 is entitled 'Relational Integrative Psychotherapy: Process and theory in practice'.

## Omar C.G. Gelo: “Psychotherapy between practice and research”

**Abstract:** Theories are organized sets of knowledge allowing us to make sense of our experience: They orient the way we perceive, describe, and explain different aspects of reality. In the field of psychotherapy, theories mainly deal with both the general understanding of humans beings (i.e., theories of *psychosocial functioning*) as well as with how professional should handle with clients in order to alleviate their suffering and/or promote their well being (i.e., theories of *clinical intervention*).

There are two main and complementary ways to support and validate psychotherapeutic theories: (1) by means of professional practice (*practice-based* knowledge) or (2) by means of empirical research (*research-based* knowledge). In the field of psychotherapy, as in many other fields of applied psychology, the first approach is much more used than the second, giving rise to what is known as science-practice gap; this latter may hinder the development of psychotherapy as a discipline.

The aim of the present keynote speech is to address the present science-practice gap in psychotherapy and to suggest different ways through which different kinds of empirical research might allow to bridge this gap. First, I briefly introduce the relationship between practice and research in terms of respectively evidence-based practice (EBP) and practice-based evidence (PBE). Then, I describe the main research approaches which characterize the continuum between EBP and PBE; the pros and cons of each research approaches will be described and discussed. Drawing on these results, I conclude by suggesting future lines of research that might be used reduce this gap.

**Biography:** Dr. Omar Gelo is Associate Professor for Dynamic Psychology at the Department of History, Society and Human Studies of the University of Salento (Italy), where he is director of the Bachelor and Master Program in Psychology. He is also director of the International Ph.D. Program in Psychotherapy Science at the Sigmund Freud University Vienna (Austria). His research interests concern: (a) the epistemological reflection on the scientific status of psychotherapy and psychological intervention; (b) the methodological reflection on the application of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods in psychotherapy and clinical research; (c) the empirical investigation of the psychotherapeutic process in different therapeutic schools (comparative process-outcome research); (d) psychotherapy integration; and (e) the application of dynamic systems theory to the study of psychotherapy; (e) the investigation of psychotherapeutic development. He recently co-edited the volume “Psychotherapy Research: Foundations, Process, and Outcome” (Springer, Vienna).

## **Volker Tschuschke: “The Wrong Understanding of Evidence-Based Research in Psychotherapy: A Plea for intensive Process-Outcome Research in Naturalistic Studies“**

**Abstract:** The presentation will draw a bow from the currently dominating EBM research paradigm in medicine and psychotherapy to research results derived from so-called effectiveness (naturalistic) studies using intensive analyses of complex process-outcome relationships.

Psychotherapy on average is very effective if trained therapists and „real“ patients are being considered. The currently practiced EBM paradigm with RCT designs do not tell us what is responsible for desired therapeutic changes in different therapy concepts with different patient populations and what might hamper benefits from treatments. Curiosities and absurdities of the dominating research paradigm will be summarized briefly, thus demonstrating that a misunderstood EBM approach in psychotherapy research is the wrong way for this scientific discipline.

The paper addresses some highlights from a large Swiss psychotherapy study (Practice Outpatient Psychotherapy Study Switzerland - PAP-S). With a Swiss wide patient sample of more than 370 patients, treated by more than 80 cooperating psychotherapists from ten different theoretical approaches, intensive process-outcome relationships revealed the relatively dispensable role of treatment adherence in therapists' technical interventions, the importance of the quality of the therapeutic alliance, the impact of sex and gender variables on therapists' technical interventions, and the importance of therapists' competence.

A final pleading will be held for the intensifying of qualitative-quantitative process-outcome research and for an offensive stance in the public to understand psychotherapy as a far more complex science compared to pharmacological or other medical disciplines which nevertheless can be scientifically explored by rigorous and extensive methodological efforts other than insufficient RCTs.

**Biography:** Volker Tschuschke was professor for Medical Psychology at the University of Cologne, Germany, for 17 years and is now professor at Sigmund Freud University in Berlin, Germany. He is devoted to empirical research in psychotherapy for more than 35 years, has published widely nationally and internationally. As a psychoanalyst, he has practiced in group as well as in individual psychotherapy; he is lecturer in severaly training institutes and supervisor in psychiatric clinics for more than 17 years.

**Registration:**

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[szyszkowitzcarla@gmail.com](mailto:szyszkowitzcarla@gmail.com)

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If You cannot do a SEPA payment (free of fees) via Your bank, You may pay cash at the registration desk at the conference (to save bank transaction fees).

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Both days:

Participants from Western Europe: 160 €

Participants from Eastern Europe: 90 €

Only first day: 80 €

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**Questions:**

If You have any further questions, please contact the chair of SARC:

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