

Psychotherapy Evolution

Welcome Address 15th World Conference for Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy and Counseling (PCE2022). Copenhagen July 4th 2022

By Klaus Pedersen

As Chair of the Danish Psychotherapeutic Society for Psychologists I strongly support this 15th World Conference for Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy and Counseling.

Climate and war have disgracefully shown that the world has a never-ending need for awareness, protection and advancement of values and behaviors inherent to person-centered and experiential psychotherapies.

The world of psychotherapy traditionally signified by opposing theoretical frameworks building upon different philosophies and beliefs has by scientific advancement and methodological ingenuity shown a clear direction: Psychotherapy traditions asymptotically approach each other towards a unified integrative practice.

In my view a nondogmatic metatheory of psychotherapy building upon general psychology and herein mental dimensionality is stepwise arising.

CBT has had a key role in the development of a firmer scientific foundation for psychotherapy, but CBT efficacy has decreased dramatically over the last 5 decades. Numerous so-called “new” psychotherapies labeled e.g. 3rd generation CBT, intensive short-term psychodynamic psychotherapies or mindfulness-based psychotherapies have arrived. Such labels function as Trojan Horses containing an elixir of core existential, humanistic and experiential principles without which psychotherapy simply does not work. Theoretical explanations of such “new” therapies are flown in from CBT, psychoanalytic frameworks etc., but seldom paying adequate tribute to the roots of concepts and practices. Such schools typically advertise with *Compassion, Acceptance, Commitment, Mindfulness, Experiential*, that is, concepts and practices originating from the existential-humanistic frame of reference in philosophy, psychology and psychotherapy. So, as you see, we are kind of in the same boat of methodology and on a common evidence-based ground of transdiagnostic principles with the therapeutic relationship as an ever-reigning factor.

The artistry of psychotherapy is much more than, but relies on, the therapeutic relationship, phenomenological acuity, working on the perceptual limit, and evocation of authenticity and congruence in the here and now. Evidence in psychotherapy have time and again revalidated the crucial importance of such parameters which are cornerstones of gestalt therapy and other existential-humanistic approaches. I think these facts place person centered and experiential methodologies at the very heart of our profession and therefore also this conference.

Thank you to the organizing committee. On behalf of the Danish Psychotherapeutic Society for Psychologists (DPSP) I wish you a wonderful conference.