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Asociația de Terapie Familială „Pro Familia”
Programul Cluj-Napoca
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**1st Ψ - Quest International Conference
in Partnership with ATF-PF**

**THE SYSTEMIC COUPLE AND FAMILY PSYCHOTHERAPY PRACTICE AND
TRAINING PROCESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY.**

A Dialogue Between Classical and Modern Approaches, Models and Trends

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

2 – 4 October 2015

**City Plaza Hotel, Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca
ROMANIA**



PLENARY PRESENTATIONS – CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

1. PLENARY PRESENTATION – FRIDAY, 10.15 - 11.45, City Plaza Ballroom

Title: Many Ways that Systemic Therapists can Exploit Research to Strengthen Their Practice

Presenter: Professor Emeritus Peter Michael Stratton, Ph.D.

Professional title and affiliation: Emeritus Professor of Family Therapy, Leeds Family Therapy and Research Centre; Institute of Health Sciences, University of Leeds, United Kingdom; Chair of EFTA Research Committee, Systemic Family Therapist and Supervisor, Developmental Psychologist.

Abstract:

Systemic therapies started from a research basis but for much of its development, research has played a minor role. The moves to postmodernism and social constructionism have for many been taken as a licence to ignore empirical findings. But as we look at the current situation we find external pressures to develop a research orientation that is fit for the purposes of health provision. We also find the development of therapeutic approaches that have a research base and use systemic knowledge but are not mainstream systemic psychotherapies.

I will discuss two main issues. 1) How can we use existing research to decide what works best in systemic therapy, and 2) what kinds of research can be useful for therapists and trainers who want to improve practice?

One of the contributions that research can make to effective therapy is by finding out what works, as distinct from what should, theoretically, work. This presentation considers outcome research from a variety of angles so that each participant can decide how they can use it to enhance their practice. I will start with an overview of the history of Evidence Based Practice, which includes the worthy efforts of the medical profession to get doctors to use research evidence, as well as the origins of randomized control trials. We will then consider the issues that arise when existing paradigms are applied to answer the perfectly legitimate question of 'does family therapy work?'. I briefly review the evidence that we do have for the effectiveness of SFT and how changes in the political landscape such as the focus on wellbeing are influencing psychotherapy research.

Now I will try to tackle the more difficult question of what process research can tell us about how systemic therapy can work. The idea that all psychotherapy is effective through the same set of common factors will be critically examined to draw out practicable implications for therapy. Research in Leeds to construct a Manual for systemic family therapy, and to analyse processes in families during therapy will be used to indicate how research can inform training by being a secure base for playful and creative therapy. I describe how we used available manuals to identify and specify 254 competences widely used by systemic therapists.

I take a look at 100 years of research in other areas such as child development, education and systemic science and hope to show that training and practice can benefit from sources that are more varied than those we usually use. A specific example that draws many of my themes together is the SCORE project to use self-report by family members to give a measure of quality of life within the family. The SCORE offers a novel approach to measuring outcome; is an effective indicator of progress in family interventions; and is a useful resource in working with families. I will conclude with a suggestion for wider attention to the family and its surrounding systems, and for routine use of research primarily as a way of making practice more effective.

Keywords: research based systemic knowledge, research informed systemic practice, outcome research in systemic therapy, critical examination of common factors, Leeds Manual of Family Therapy, competency based training.



2. PLENARY PRESENTATION - FRIDAY, 15.00 - 16.30, City Plaza Ballroom

Title: Training Systemic Therapists for the 21st century – Virtual Intimacies and World Families in a Globalized World

Presenter: Professor Maria Borcsa, Ph.D.

Professional title and affiliation: Professor of Clinical Psychology and systemic approaches, Accredited Psychotherapist, Family Therapist and Supervisor, University of Applied Sciences, Nordhausen, Germany; President of the European Family Therapy Association (EFTA)

Abstract:

Mobility and the digital era have changed our societies in a fundamental way. They shape the way of living as an individual as well as a couple or a family. Today, migration can be short-termed or long-lasting, having a different meaning for the younger generation than it had for the generations before globalization. When, for instance, young adults go abroad for a good job opportunity while staying in steady contact over Skype with their parents and grandparents, divergent cognitive and affective representations are actualized in the same family about closeness and distance as well as being and feeling related to each other.

More and more, our students and trainees are “digital natives”, whereas the trainers are mostly “digital immigrants”. Obviously this is one issue to be reflected on in training, as also clients are multifarious concerning their use of new technologies. Digital communication empowers connectedness between family members living in different countries or on different continents, being able to share everyday concerns with someone physically not present. Distance is not necessarily a loss anymore but a change in the way of being relational with specific chances and challenges.

As there have been no clinical theories available up to now on these societal alternations, the presentation wants to give some ideas on how we can increase awareness of irreversible societal changes in our training practice.

Keywords: mobility, globalization, world families, digital natives (trainees), digital immigrants (trainers), representations about distance and closeness, awareness of social change.

3. PLENARY LIVE TELE-PRESENTATION - FRIDAY, 17.00 - 18.30, City Plaza Ballroom

Title: Contextual Therapy - A Model of Therapy that Bridges Past and Present

Presenter: Professor Catherine Ducommun-Nagy, M.D.

Professional title and affiliation: Clinical Associate Professor, Family Therapy Program, Drexel University, Philadelphia, USA; President of the Institute for Contextual Growth, Inc., Glenside, PA, USA, Specialist FMH (Switzerland) in psychiatry and psychotherapy of children and adults, Teacher of Contextual Therapy

Abstract:

Boszormenyi-Nagy is remembered not just as the founder of contextual therapy but also as one of the pioneers of the family therapy movement. He spent a career that spanned over close to fifty years exploring what constitutes the therapeutic moment in therapy and that informed the development of contextual therapy from his first publications in the late 50's to his last statement about his approach in 2000.

At this point, contextual therapy needs to be understood as an approach that bridges past and present. Examples will be presented to illustrate this assumption. For instance, Boszormenyi-Nagy's description of family loyalties as a source of family homeostasis belongs to classical period of family therapy. By contrast, his dialectic definition of autonomy and his relational definition of justice belong to a postmodern vision and his multidimensional model of relational reality leaves a place open for the integration of any new neuro-scientific discoveries about the origins of mental illness in his model of family therapy.



Hence contextual therapy is not just a classical model of therapy that still can be a resource to 21st century therapists but it is also a true 21st approach.

Keywords: contextual therapy, family loyalties, dialectic definition of autonomy, relational definition of justice, multidimensional model of relational reality, integration, postmodern, neurosciences.

4. PLENARY PRESENTATION – SATURDAY, 9.30 – 11.00, City Plaza Ballroom

Title: **Developments in Couple Psychoanalytic and Systemic Practice. Past, Present and Future**

Presenter: **Damian McCann**

Professional title and affiliation: Clinical Lecturer, Individual and Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist, Systemic Couple and Family Psychotherapist, Supervisor; Head of Clinical Services, Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships, London, UK; Consultant Family & Systemic Psychotherapist, NHS - Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service, Edgware Community Hospital; Advanced Clinical Associate with Pink Therapy, Co-Director of PGDip Relationship Therapy with Gender and Sexual Diversities.

Abstract:

This presentation will explore developments in thinking relating to systemic and psychoanalytic couple psychotherapy. After outlining the key concepts of both and discussing the similarities and differences, their application to clinical practice will be then be examined. Particular attention will be focused on gender and sexuality and domestic violence, since both of these areas have challenged and extended thinking and practice within the field. The presentation will end with some future objectives for couple psychotherapy.

Keywords: systemic and psychoanalytic couple psychotherapy, clinical practice, gender, sexual diversity, domestic violence.

5. PLENARY LIVE TELE-PRESENTATION V – SATURDAY, 15.00 – 16.30, City Plaza Ballroom

Title: **Love, Secrets, Cybersex, Infidelity, Addiction – and Forgiveness?**

Presenter: **Janis Abrahms Spring, Ph.D.**

Professional title and affiliation: Clinical Psychologist, private practice, Connecticut, USA; Faculty Member, Ackerman Institute for the Family, Expert in Couple Therapy, former Clinical Supervisor, Department of Psychology, Yale University.

Abstract:

Even the most experienced therapist can feel overwhelmed by couples ravaged by infidelity as partners rage, despair, and precipitously drop out of therapy. Each battles feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. Dr. Spring's 37 years of pioneering work inform her strategies for helping couples tackle and transcend the trauma of infidelity, including the particular challenges presented by affairs in cyberspace. You'll learn a radical model for managing secrets in couple therapy. You'll also gather skills for helping hurt and unfaithful partners normalize the emotional avalanche of their experience so they don't feel so shattered, crazy, or alone. You'll learn how to help them appreciate the power, illusion, and addiction of romantic love and make a thoughtful, self-interested decision about whether to fight for the relationship or end it. If the couple chooses to stay together, you'll also learn strategies for helping partners rebuild trust, rekindle an intimate connection, and earn forgiveness. The emphasis of this workshop will be on providing practical and concrete tools for helping partners take responsibility for their share of the relationship damage, grow as individuals, and, perhaps, bond together as a couple more strongly than ever before.

Key words: trauma, infidelity, affairs in cyberspace, secrets, addiction, secrets, trust, forgiveness.



6. PLENARY LIVE TELE-PRESENTATION VI – SATURDAY, 17.00 – 18.30, City Plaza Ballroom

Title: Collaborative Therapy: Practical Skills for Diverse Communities

Presenter: Professor Diane R. Gehart, Ph.D.

Professional title and affiliation: Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy, Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling, California State University, Northridge, USA, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Professional Counselor, Approved Supervisor and Clinical Fellow, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

Abstract:

Collaborative therapy is a contemporary systemic approach that has been widely used in North America, Europe, South America, and Asia with a wide range of clients and problems. This highly flexible therapy model is grounded in social constructionist principles that emphasize client strengths and resources. The therapist's role requires a disciplined curious stance that enables clients to reimagine their problem and potential in new and more helpful ways. This approach is particularly practical when working with diverse clients or in cross-cultural contexts because it respectfully works within the client's world constructs to generate new possibilities for addressing life challenges.

Keywords: collaborative therapy; postmodern; diversity; practical skills

7. PLENARY PRESENTATION – SUNDAY, 11.30 – 13.00, City Plaza Ballroom

Title: Epistemology not History – The Communication Theory Foundation of Systemic Therapy

Presenter: Professor Wendel Alfred Ray, Ph.D.

Professional title and affiliation: Spyker Endowed Chair, Marriage & Family Therapy Program - Tenured Full Professor, School of Health Professions, College of Health & Pharmaceutical Sciences, The University of Louisiana – Monroe (ULM); Senior Research Fellow, Mental Research Institute (MRI), Palo Alto, CA; Senior Archivist, Founder and first Director of the Don D. Jackson Archive; Psychotherapist (private practice), Supervisor - Individual, Couple, and Family Therapy.

Abstract:

During the 1950s and 1960s, first in the work of Gregory Bateson's Palo Alto Research Team (Don D. Jackson, John Weakland, Jay Haley, & William Fry) and continuing at the Mental Research Institute (MRI) founded by Jackson, a paradigmatic shift that is Communication Theory based System Therapy launched the fields of family and later brief therapy. Using rare film, audio recordings, transcripts and photos from Bateson Team meetings, followed by family therapy interviews conducted by Don Jackson, and segments of John Weakland, Dick Fisch, & Paul Watzlawick's Brief Therapy, this presentation will reintroduce participants to fundamental concepts of communication theory, to Jackson's Conjoint Family Therapy, and MRI Brief Therapy – the forerunner to all current Systemic and Interaction Focused Brief Therapies.

Keywords: communication, epistemology, interaction, recursive causality, relationship between, pattern, 1st order and 2nd order cybernetics



WORKSHOPS – CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

1. WORKSHOP – PSYCHOTHERAPY PRACTICE (I. PARALLEL WORKSHOP SECTION) FRIDAY, 12.00-13.30 – City Plaza Ballroom

Title: Same-sex Parenting. Babes in Arms or Babes in the Woods?

Presenter: Damian McCann

Professional title and affiliation: Clinical Lecturer, Individual and Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist, Systemic Couple and Family Psychotherapist, Supervisor; Head of Clinical Services, Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships, London, UK; Consultant Family & Systemic Psychotherapist, NHS - Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service, Edgware Community Hospital; Advanced Clinical Associate with Pink Therapy, Co-Director of PGDip Relationship Therapy with Gender and Sexual Diversities

Abstract

This workshop will consider developments in thinking about same-sex parenting and its implications for practice. An examination of the research findings relating to lesbian and gay parents and child development will provide a particular backdrop to the question of 'babes in arms or babes in the woods'. Participants will be encouraged to explore their own relationship to the subject of same-sex parenting and cross cultural considerations. Understanding the specific clinical issues for lesbian and gay parents and their children will also be examined and participants will be encouraged to bring their own clinical dilemmas for exploration.

Keywords: same sex-parenting, research findings relating to lesbian and gay parents and child development, cross cultural considerations, psychotherapists value system, specific clinical issues, clinical dilemmas.

2. WORKSHOP – PSYCHOTHERAPY PRACTICE (I. PARALLEL WORKSHOP SECTION) FRIDAY, 12.00-13.30 – "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Amphitheatre A. Roşca (nr.13.)

Title: Anxious, Secure and Avoidant Family Therapists: Reflecting on our own Attachment Orientation

Presenters: 1. Zoltán Kónya, M.D.; 2. Ágnes Kónya, M.D.

Professional title and affiliation:

1. Psychotherapist, Supervisor and Trainer in Systemic Family Therapy, AGAPE Life Care Foundation / Cluj Systemic Family Therapy Association, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
2. Psychotherapist, Supervisor and Trainer in Systemic Family Therapy, AGAPE Life Care Foundation / Cluj Systemic Family Therapy Association

Abstract:

According to an often cited research finding, the quality of the relationship between therapists and their clients is a much more important contributor to therapeutic outcome than is choice of technique and the application of evidence based methods. Better alliance often means better outcome. Therapeutic relationships are the result of what both therapists and their clients bring to their encounter, including their respective attachment styles. While in a first order cybernetics frame family therapists are seen as objective observers of the family system, from a second order view the therapist emerges as part of the system being observed, bringing along his/her own anxieties, preoccupations, dismissive tendencies, blind spots and, possibly, disorganization and unresolved losses.

Attachment theory can be seen as one of the threads running through the whole history of family therapy, from Bowlby being considered one of the pioneers of the field to family therapists' recent renewal of interest in attachments. In this workshop we would like to briefly review research findings concerning the therapist's



attachment style (its connection with the choice of profession and therapeutic orientation, therapeutic alliance, outcome and the risk of burnout) and create a dialogical space for reflection on one's own attachment perspective and its possible impact on client work with individuals, couples and families. The role of the therapist's attachment style will be examined with reference to psychotherapy in general and systemic psychotherapy practice in particular.

Keywords: family therapy, systemic therapy, attachment theory, therapist attachment style, therapist self-reflection

3. WORKSHOP – PSYCHOTHERAPY PRACTICE AND PSYCHIATRIC APPROACH (I. PARALLEL WORKSHOP SECTION) FRIDAY, 12.00-13.30 – "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Room nr. 19.

Title: Families Coping with Schizophrenia – A Psychiatric Approach **CANCELLED**

Presenter: Mihaela Fadgyas-Stănculete, M.D., Ph.D.

Professional title and affiliation: Senior Psychiatrist, Department of Psychiatry, Cluj Emergency County Hospital; Assistant Professor, Department of Neurosciences, „Iuliu Hațieganu” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj-Napoca, Licensed Psychologist.

Abstract:

Schizophrenia is a chronic and very disabling mental illness where the caregivers are likely to face increasing levels of burden and stress. Pharmacological treatment should be in conjunction with family interventions. Relatives have difficulties in understanding the illness-related behaviour. 'Negative' symptoms are often a misunderstood problem. Despite their difficulties, relatives do not complain much, although they receive little information, advice or support from the professionals engaged in treating the patient.

Previous studies identified several psychosocial factors that could influence recovery in schizophrenia. The factors which promote recovery are represented by a) adjustment, coping and reappraisal (b) responding to the illness (c) social support and close relationships.

The factors which negatively impact the recovery are: (a) negative interactions and social isolation (b) internal barriers (c) hopelessness. The expressed emotions (EE) is one of the major psychosocial stressor and considered to be an adverse family environment. EE has been found to be one of the robust predictors of relapse in schizophrenia.

A comprehensive assessment of the patient and the family is necessary for decisions related psychiatric treatment and the opportunity of indication for psychotherapeutic intervention. Psychosocial interventions can address both vulnerability, risk factors and protective factors related to the caregivers.

Keywords: schizophrenia, caregivers, coping, protective and risk factors, high expressed emotions, psychosocial interventions during acute and chronic phase.



4. WORKSHOP – PSYCHOTHERAPY PRACTICE (II. PARALLEL WORKSHOP SECTION) SATURDAY, 11.30-13.00 – City Plaza Ballroom

Title: *The Art of Using the Self of the Therapist in Systemic Psychotherapy*

Presenter: *Haviva Ayal, Ph.D.*

Professional title and affiliation: Co-founder and Co-director of Shinui Institute (1985-2007) and of Focus Institute, Israel (2008-present), Visiting professor - Family Therapy Postgraduate Program, Tel Aviv University, Systemic Individual, Couple and Family Psychotherapist and Trainer, Private Practice, Herzelia, Israel

Abstract:

In order to be effective therapists, we need to be able to wisely use all resources available to us. This means being aware of what we know and what we don't know, being open to learning new things and being able to choose what is right in a particular situation with a particular client.

How do we develop this wisdom? How do we integrate what we know about ourselves, with the theories and techniques we have learned? with the information about the lives of our patients, and their needs?. How to use our intuition without discarding the knowledge we acquired, and how to express all these in multilevel communication?

Inspired by the philosophies of M. Buber and E. Levinas, and the humanistic-experiential psychology this workshop focuses on the human encounter between therapist and patient (individual, couple, or family). By human encounter we mean the moments when people really see each other and meet as authentic subjects – as opposed to objectifying each other. We mean a space where the Therapist and Client each enhance the full humanity of the other. The authenticity of the therapist enhances the authenticity of the client and mutual growth is experienced.

The role of the therapist is described differently by different therapeutic theories reflecting their core beliefs about illness, health and healing, each suggesting techniques coherent to these beliefs.

The systemic approaches perceive the therapist as an equal part of the system, taking an active role in the change process and using a variety of different techniques

The basic assumption of this workshop is that the use of self is an integral part of the therapeutic encounter, occurring and relevant to all theoretical approaches.

The first part of the workshop will offer a short review of the different definitions of the therapist's role throughout the history of psychotherapy, and discussion of participants' experiences during their training and their practice, regarding their use of self will be made.

In the second part, using artistic media, we will explore and experience ways to enhance our abilities to go beyond techniques – and enjoy the process. Using a video of a master class in Modern Dance we will demonstrate the use of self in a different medium and stimulate our own exploration and experiencing.

The last part will be a group discussion relating to the implications of using the self of the therapist in the different ways each participant practices therapy.

Keywords: self of the therapist, intuition, role of therapist, experiential learning, creativity.



5. WORKSHOP – PSYCHOTHERAPY PRACTICE (II. PARALLEL WORKSHOP SECTION)
SATURDAY, 11.30-13.00 – ”Babeş-Bolyai” University, Room nr.19.

Title: Systemic Conceptualization and Psychotherapeutic Interventions for Couples with Narcissistic - Borderline Functioning: Classical and Modern Approaches

Presenter: University Lecturer Carmen Costea-Bărluțiu, Ph.D.

Professional title and affiliation: University Lecturer, Department of Special Education, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca; systemic couple and family therapist, President of the Ethical Committee, “Pro Familia” Family Therapy Association (ATF-PF, Miercurea-Ciuc, Romania); Researcher, Working Group of “Ψ-Quest” Association, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Abstract:

Various factors have been investigated in the attempt to clarify the origin of dissatisfaction and discord in couples and large discrepancies in partners’ personality traits are among them. The narcissistic – borderline couple has been identified as being at risk for highly conflictual interactions, leading to increased emotional instability and frequent crisis situations.

From an object-relations theory perspective, Kernberg considers primitive defenses, poorly developed sense of self and object, with intact reality testing as features of the two types of personality pathologies. In such couples, the issues of loss, rejection, abandonment are constantly activated during interactions, as well as the inability to tolerate both autonomy and intimacy, both symbiosis and separation. With regard to the family structure, the difficulties in boundary clarification, subsystems establishment are most apparent, while there is a high risk for coalition formation, either with children or with members of the family of origin or extended families.

Narcissistic individuals’ functioning improves in the context of an attachment relationship that recreates the primary dependent attachment with a submissive and mothering partner, while borderline persons, who experience high levels of rejection anxiety in attachment relationships, need an autonomous, sensitive partner, able to offer emotional support. The complementary nature of the conflicts leads to strong mutual attraction between narcissistic and borderline personalities, but the alternance between termination and reunion is a common feature of the couple functioning. Thus, the sense of autonomy is impossible to achieve, as the tentative to separate from the other person leads to an increase of insecurity in the relationship, the fear of breakup, as if the two would be two sides of a mirror.

Often narcissistic and borderline defence mechanisms are rooted in traumatic early experiences and the therapeutic space offers the right environment for the process of healing of these wounds and thus overcoming the vulnerabilities of the present relationship. Couple therapy approaches the escalation of emotions, as well as the cycle of dysfunctional interactions. A strong sense of safety in the therapeutic process is necessary and it is achieved by the therapist’s empathic rapport with both members of the couple, as well as a capacity of the therapist to tolerate and contain difficult emotions. Both narcissistic and borderline disorders need healthy, mature and stable intimate relationships in order to overcome their own vulnerabilities and, eventually, become more aware and responsive to the needs of the other.

The issues of entitlement, attachment and intimacy, power, dependency and vulnerability will be discussed as a trans-theoretical approach to therapeutic interventions will be embraced. The couple functioning will be considered in the light of classic psychodynamic models, as well as postmodern, constructivist theories, at the dyadic-relational level regarding the meaning-making process around various problems arising in these type of couples and various ways to surmount them in therapy. Other recent developments in therapy that benefit from the contribution of attachment theory, such as Mentalization-Based Treatment and Emotion-Focused Therapy will also be discussed and clinical material will be presented. Some of the techniques used in therapy will be discussed during the activity.

Keywords: narcissistic personality, borderline functioning, couple and family systems, object relations, attachment, autonomy, intimacy, power, entitlement, meaning making.

6. WORKSHOP – PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING AND PRACTICE (II. PARALLEL WORKSHOP SECTION) - SATURDAY, 11.30-13.00 – "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Amphitheatre A. Roşca (nr.13.)

Title: Tensions Between Standardized and Non-Standardized Assessment Procedures in Systemic Therapy. Romanian Validation Study of a Battery for Individual, Couple/Family Functioning and Therapeutic Change: Preliminary Results

Presenter: Enikő Školka, Ph.D.

Professional title and affiliation: Psychotherapist, Trainer and Supervisor in Systemic Couple and Family Psychotherapy; Ericksonian Hypno-psychotherapist; Focusing Oriented, Client Centred Child, Adolescent and Adult Psychotherapist – private practice; Chair of the Professional Committee of "Pro-Familia" Family Therapy Association, Miercurea-Ciuc, Romania; Coordinator of the Research Working Group of "Ψ-Quest" Association, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Abstract:

This workshop will provide a dialogical space for the analysis of the standardized assessment procedures' role in systemic interventions and of the relevance of building specific competences in this area, during training process. Preliminary results of a partial validation study will be discussed.

In the first part the participant's attitude toward standardized assessment procedure will be explored and a short overview will be offered on the increasing interest manifested in the last decades in the systemic psychotherapy training towards: case conceptualization models, competence based training, improvement of the clinical judgment and the therapeutic alliance, progress monitoring, outcome research, and trans-theoretical integration. The long lasting tension between the bio-medical and contextual approaches, based on epistemological differences which underlie different schools, models in systemic psychotherapy will be outlined. How balancing this tension and the way in which utilizing assessment instruments during psychotherapeutic work can enhance the efficacy of the process will be emphasized.

In the second part the „Ψ-Quest" Systemic Individual, Couple/ Family Assessment Battery will be presented along with the main constructs operationalized by this instrument and the translation and administration protocols used by our team during the first steps of the partial validation process of the following:

- three systemic focused instruments: - *The Systemic Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation* (SCORE-15, Stratton, Bland, Janes, and Lask, 2010); *Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale IV* (FACES-IV, Olson, 2010) and the complementary *Clinical Rating Scale for the Couple and Family Map* (Olson, 2010); *The Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised* (DSI-R, Skowron, and Schmitt, 2003)
- an attachment related instrument - *Experience in Close Relationships Revised* (ECR-R, Fraley, Waller, Brennan, 2000).

These tools operationalize constructs like: attachment anxiety and avoidance in adult dyads, differentiation of self in adults, different types of family functioning, perturbed and functional couple/family communication, couple/family satisfaction, client system evolution during the psychotherapy process, early markers of possible outcome.

In the third part our team's pilot study regarding the Romanian validation process of these questionnaires will be presented, along with data resulting from the administration of the battery to a significant number of adult members of non-clinical, literate families. The factor structure and reliability will be reported and the cross-cultural invariance of the measures will be discussed. The presentation will also include the next steps in the validation process for our country.

In the last part the advantages and disadvantages, limits and precautions of using assessment tools in systemic practice will be analysed. The elements upon which practitioners and trainers could fundament their decisions of selecting systemic and non-systemic assessment instruments during their work will be discussed.

Keywords: epistemology, evidence informed practice, systemic assessment tools, ECR-R, DSI-R, FACES IV, CRS, SCORE-15, attitude towards SAI, clinical judgment, therapeutic relationship, translation and administration protocols, validation study, preliminary results, advantages and disadvantages, limits of using assessment tools.



**7. WORKSHOP – PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING (III. PARALLEL WORKSHOP SECTION)
SUNDAY, 09.30-11.00 – "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Room nr. 19.**

Title: Changes in the Dynamics of the Marital Relationship After Childbirth. Case Examples from Personal Psychotherapeutic Practice

Presenter: Antal Mária Ildikó

Professional title and affiliation: Founding member of the "Pro-Familia" Family Therapy Association (ATF-PF), Miercurea-Ciuc; member of the Professional Committee of the same association and program coordinator for Miercurea-Ciuc, Psychotherapist, trainer and supervisor in systemic couple and family therapy – private practice.

Abstract:

In the first part of the workshop I will illustrate the dynamics behind the difficulties, blockages, problems and dysfunctions of the marital relationship after childbirth that I encounter in my work with couples and families.

Regardless of the nature of the problem that families sought therapy for, the following factors could be identified as being present in their dysfunctional marital relationship: insular or separate lifestyles, dissatisfaction, resentment, blaming the other, communication deficits, sexual problems, chronic power-struggles (dominant woman-dependent man), weak or poorly-functioning fathers, over-involved and overprotective mothers and near-divorce crises.

In my experience, in a previously balanced relationship, interpersonal and interactional conflicts start appearing after the birth of the first child: new expectations on both sides and frustrations, problems in integrating the parent role, difficulties in managing boundaries (eg. with grandparents and other relatives), parenting worries (mostly mothers), and neglecting the marital subsystem to a large extent or completely.

During the intervention with these cases of married couples I have used many theoretical approaches: the Bowen family model, structural theories, object-relations approach for couple- and family therapy, transactional analysis, Jürg Willi's collusion theory, Bader-Pearson theory and the principles of emotion focused therapy.

I sought to understand more about the origins and persistence of these patterns based on the afore-mentioned theories.

I have attempted to trace the changes in the marital relationship after childbirth: evolution, co-evolution, blockages in development of the marital relationship, dysfunctions, systemic factors and dynamics which determine the blockages. I will discuss these issues.

In the second part of the workshop I will present specific therapeutic observations and therapeutic decisions I made while working with clients who struggle in this specific life cycle with issues like: the way the child's problem, symptom, illness is spreading to the entire family system, and how it can be presented in this new light to the members of the family, conceptualizing of the family triangles, de-triangulating, focusing on the dysfunctions in the marital relationship, motivating couples to change, enhancing the differentiation of the selves, repairing, mending the emotional distance from parents. The main therapeutic goals are the enhancement of the functionality and operability of the marital relationship (in its: cognitive, emotional, practical, sexual dimensions) and the strengthening of the parental subsystem.

Keywords:

stages of relationship development, triangulations, de-triangulation, differentiation of the self, basic emotions, attachment, functionality/dysfunctionality of the marital relationship



**8. WORKSHOP – PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING (III. PARALLEL WORKSHOP SECTION)
SUNDAY, 09.30-11.00 – "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Amphitheatre A. Roşca (nr.13.)**

Title: Training systemic therapists for the 21st century – virtual intimacies and world families in a globalized world

Presenter: Professor Maria Borcsa, Ph.D.

Professional title and affiliation: Professor of Clinical Psychology and systemic approaches, Accredited Psychotherapist, Family Therapist and Supervisor, University of Applied Sciences, Nordhausen, Germany; President of the European Family Therapy Association (EFTA).

Abstract:

The workshop is based on the presentation with the same title. It will focus on personal experience with the areas of mobility and migration in the family of origin as well as the actual family. We will look at the variety of family rules regarding these issues and analyze family narrations about the "here and there(s)". Furthermore, we will investigate the personal and familial attitudes towards and the use of digital technologies. These exercises can be used in systemic therapy training to enhance awareness not only of the therapists-to-be but also in the direct work with clients.

Keywords: family rules on mobility, family narratives about migration, personal and familial attitudes towards ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies).



**9. WORKSHOP – PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING (III. PARALLEL WORKSHOP SECTION)
SUNDAY, 09.30-11.00 – City Plaza Ballroom**

Title: What Can We Adopt From Current Developments in Wider Systems Science to Enrich Our Systemic Approaches to Families

Presenter: Professor Emeritus Peter Michael Stratton, Ph.D.

Professional title and affiliation:

Emeritus Professor of Family Therapy, Leeds Family Therapy and Research Centre; Institute of Health Sciences, University of Leeds, United Kingdom; Chair of EFTA Research Committee, Systemic Family Therapist and Supervisor, Developmental Psychologist.

Abstract:

This workshop plans to bring together people who think that systemic therapists can benefit from advances in other applications of systemic science. Participants will be invited to bring and share their knowledge of areas of systemic science that could be helpful for our work.

I will start with a brief overview of the history of systemics in family therapy and compare it with current systemic activism in conflict situations and ecology. As we encounter different systemic developments and consider ways that they have been effective, we will explore ways that we and our clients might benefit from incorporating them. For example, Yannis Louris implemented systemic intervention programmes starting with divided Cyprus (http://www.futureworlds.eu/wiki/Technology_for_Peace) but bringing the same approach to Palestine-Israel. Ray Ison, current chair of the International Systemic Sciences Society is representative of many using systemic approaches with government organisations to tackle ecological threats.

As the workshop progresses I will introduce areas of systemic science that I have found exciting. Soft Systems Methodology (Checkland) of which Tajino and Smith (2005) say “Unlike typical ‘hard’ systems approaches which have been developed in natural sciences to solve problems involving clear cause-effect relationships, SSM is a ‘soft’ systems approach that deals with complex human situations in which people with various world views, or senses of values, are engaged in communication.” (i.e. us, it seems to me).

A second area will be Anticipatory Systems Theory. Rosen (2011) sees anticipation as the director of curiosity and the source of creativity. Because living systems (and workshop presenters) anticipate what needs to be explored, they “avoid boredom and incomprehension”. Which could lead me to discussing Neisser’s anticipatory exploratory cycle leading to a detailed study of Contingencies and the attributions/ causal expectations by which family members guide their interactions. Leading to ways the self is continually created through its anticipations.

I will invite participants to join me in my ongoing attempt to understand the ways in which peoples’ anticipations of each other in the family and of wider systems, contribute to the continual creation of new selves-in-dialogue, and to the family as an entity.

But participants might have even more exciting examples that we would talk about instead.

Keywords: systemic science, conflict situations, ecology, attributions, expectations, Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), Anticipatory Systems Theory, anticipatory exploratory cycle, self, selves in dialogue, a systemic definition of health.



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