



JOINT POSITION ON PSYCHOTHERAPY

Psychotherapy is an application of procedures and techniques based on scientific evidence and research carried out within the scope of psychological science, so it cannot be considered a profession, but rather a mode of psychological intervention when practiced by psychologists.

Delving into the history of psychotherapy, the discipline has been practiced since the early 20th century, has an identifiable body of theory and is based on general skills and knowledge of health and human behaviour and the mental processes involved.

Thus, part of the knowledge of Psychotherapy Professionals is not, and should not be, acquired only in the specific training in Psychotherapy (in programs that should meet the minimum training requirements agreed upon at the European level), coming from the basic academic training of these professionals, which should include fundamental knowledge about health and, especially, mental health.

As far as the practice of psychologists is concerned, it should also be noted that these professionals practice under a Code of Ethics, which aims to protect clients and combat improper practices in psychological intervention (including Psychotherapy). These mechanisms enhance the protection of the best interest of citizens who seek and use Psychotherapy services.

Psychotherapy should be a specialised practice carried out by health professionals (namely Psychologists and Doctors) who are duly regulated. Its establishment as a profession or any other form of regulating this activity that flatly ignores the link between psychological science and the practice of Psychotherapy is unjustifiable and should be avoided. The autonomisation of psychotherapy, as a profession, would trivialise this activity and make it potentially dangerous, like so many other activities emerging in the health field. This situation poses a risk to the mental health of those who use the services, affecting the safety and well-being of the population. Psychotherapy has gained great relevance in the world due to the good practices resulting from its integration, from the beginning, into the mental health professions, such as through Psychologists and Physicians.

In short, it is necessary to continue to ensure that this type of intervention is practiced by properly qualified professionals, with adequate basic training that allows for the proper integration of learning and training that psychotherapy requires. The governments and decision makers should focus on compliance with the regulatory, ethical and scientific control provided for within the scope of other regulated professions. To this end we shall propose, at the EFPA General Meeting, that its members adopt this position and that the EFPA Executive Committee initiate the necessary actions with the European bodies.