

A 'Health Wise Paris' sub-group **Simply Speaking** will be hosting

A Conversation on the Statutory Regulation of Psychotherapy in France

2pm – 4.30pm Saturday May 16 2009 at the University of Chicago, Paris

Bulletin n° 2

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- UK Alliance Tour: "*State Regulation of Counselling and Psychotherapy*

Risks and Realities"

What is happening in the UK?

IS this be the future of psychotherapy in Europe?!

In terms of statutory regulation of psychotherapy, the UK is one step in front of the French government. Will the French be influenced by the British system? The British government has set up a regulatory body called the 'Health Professionals Council' (HPC <http://www.hpc-uk.org/>) **which already regulates 13 other professions. They are going full steam ahead towards regulation. This year, the title of**

‘psychologist’ will be regulated for the first time by the State’s administrators leaving the British Psychological Society, like it did the General Medical Council, by the wayside. It is now the administrators rather than the practitioners who decide. Legislation to regulate psychotherapists will be introduced under a "further order". HPC is also looking into the possibility of regulating counselling. Is this the direction Europe will be taking in the future?

The HPC is, however, being heavily criticised on many aspects: “*The Health Professions Council plans a public campaign to discredit those practitioners whose own practice and ethical code would not allow them to sign up to its market-led vision of therapy and normality*” (Coalition Against Over-Regulation of Psychotherapy). Although the HPC claims transparency and an ‘evidence based’ approach, confounding ignorance with objectivity, is nevertheless oriented by an ideology. So before signing up, what ideology are we signing up to? What are its ethical implications?

Of course, there are those that prefer to remain ignorant of the ethical implications, and who are happy to comply with the HPC for reasons of personal interest and the prestige of having a recognised title: “*...the HPC's approach to ethics and discipline is bureaucratic, adversarial, utterly devoid of the emphasis on conciliation, mediation and mutual understanding that characterizes the best contemporary approaches to ethics and discipline in the therapy field. In this, and in other ways, far from raising standards, the HPC has embarked on lowering them. Those psychotherapy and counselling organisations that support the HPC process know this perfectly well but remain silent for fear of jeopardizing the advantages and benefits that will accrue from compliance*”. (Press release, The Alliance for Counselling and Psychotherapy)

Does this reflect the direction Europe, and thus France, will be taking in the near future?

Below you will find a number of articles detailing the UK situation and information about those who are resisting the direction taken by the UK government and why. One of those fighting this battle is Janet Low, Phd., who will be joining us on the 16 May at the conversation and speaking to us about what she has discovered.

If you wish to respond to this bulletin, please contact us at simplyspeaking.hwp@gmail.com

JANET LOW speaking at the CONVERSATION

If you are already on the mailing list of the Alliance, you might already been receiving messages from Janet Low. Her work for **The Alliance for Counselling and**

Psychotherapy <http://www.allianceforcandp.org> consists in keeping a close eye on the functioning of the HPC and related bodies. She will be speaking at the Conversation on the 16 May about working as a psychotherapist, counsellor or psychologist in the UK today and where Europe might be taking psychotherapy in the future.

ALLIANCE PRESS RELEASE 17th April 2009

Read the press release reporting on the inaugural conference of the Alliance detailing the scale of the UK resistance to statutory regulation of psychotherapy:

The Next Steps - Inaugural Conference of the Alliance, April 5 2009

<http://www.allianceforcandp.org/pdfs/PostConferencePressRelease.pdf>

The Guardian

Letters

State must stay out of psychotherapy

The Guardian, Thursday 9 April 2009

Under new government proposals, psychoanalysis and the talking therapies will be regulated by the state under the Health Professions Council. We wish to register our protest at this initiative. Psychotherapy is a private conversation and the proposed regulations threaten to limit the basic human right to freedom of speech. Each individual should have the freedom to choose the therapist they wish to consult, without the state dictating who is legitimate and who is not.

The new proposals have shown a serious misunderstanding of the nature of talking therapy. They see it as a definable technique to be applied with predictable outcomes. Yet the key to talking therapies is the nature of the relationship between the parties, rather than the performance of any particular procedure. It involves an open-ended relationship, where results may emerge that were never predicted or even thought of beforehand. The proposed regulation leaves no room for the unknown, as if the solution to each person's problems were known in advance. Government intervention thus threatens the very foundation of analytic work, compromising both its creativity and authenticity.

The new regulations - which include 451 rules for the analytic session - would make it impossible to practise psychoanalysis and many therapies in the way they have been for the last hundred years. The HPC plans a public campaign to discredit those practitioners whose own practice and ethical code would not allow them to sign up to

its market-led vision of therapy and normality.

The main reason given for the regulatory project is protection of the public. Yet all therapy organisations already have stringent codes of ethics and practice, as well as complaints procedures. Replacing these with an unsuited model of healthcare will destroy vitality of the field for both therapists and those who consult them. We urge an alternative model, like that adopted in other countries, where government intervention is limited to the requirement that all therapists join a register administered by an independent professional body, giving full details of their training and affiliations. This would enable members of the public to make their own informed choice, rather than having politicians make it for them. We urge everyone who cares about the preservation of the talking therapies to register their support by signing the above text at www.coregp.org.

Lisa Appignanesi, Jake Arnott, Christopher Bollas, Alain de Botton, Tracey Emin, Sophie Fiennes, Esther Freud, Peter Gabriel, Antony Gormley, John Gray, Christopher Hampton, Gary Hume, Lee Hall, Oliver James, Anish Kapoor, Beeban Kidron, Hari Kunzru, Hanif Kureishi, Darian Leader, Andrew O'Hagan, Michael Nyman, Susie Orbach, Adam Phillips, Marc Quinn, Will Self, Richard Sennett, Jonathan Sklar, Gillian Slovo, Ali Smith, Gavin Turk, Slavoj Zizek and 16 others

Coalition Against Over-Regulation of Psychotherapy

guardian.co.uk © Guardian News and Media Limited 2009

CHANNEL 4 NEWS REPORT

Hanif Kureshi (Author) and Andrew Samuels (Professor of Analytical Psychology, University of Essex) give an alternative point of view from Marc Seale, Chief Executive of HPC. To see the reportage, click here:

<http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/society/health/analyst+regulation+just+a+dream+/3076577>

Article from 'THE INDEPENDENT' newspaper:

Psychotherapists in turmoil over plans to start regulation

Government aim to protect clients from abuse will 'stifle creativity', say opponents

By Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor

Saturday, 11 April 2009

Their aim, as they put it, is to turn "neurotic misery" into ordinary human unhappiness. But now Britain's psychotherapists have heaped anguish on themselves with a damaging feud that has split their ranks.

The dispute has erupted over Government proposals for the regulation of the country's 50,000 therapists to protect their clients from abuse and exploitation. While some therapists accept the need for official monitoring of what they do, others are furious at what they see as a Government attempt to control how they talk to their patients.

Demand for "talking treatments" is booming as doctors and patients have recognised that they are more effective and safer as the first-line treatment for depression and anxiety in place of antidepressant drugs and tranquillisers. Fears of job losses and economic insecurity caused by the recession are driving increasing numbers to seek help.

Phillip Hodson: Counselling needs a legal basis for client protection

Alan Johnson, the Health Secretary, announced last year that an extra 3,600 therapists would be trained to provide cognitive behaviour therapy – a technique for helping patients overcome negative thinking – on the NHS at a cost of £173m a year from 2010.

But every barrel contains bad apples. There is concern about therapists who abuse their position by, for example, having a sexual relationship with a client. Witness, a charity supporting those abused by health and social care workers, recorded 83 cases in 2005-06.

Under the proposals for the regulation of psychotherapists, published in February 2007, they would be required to register with the **Health Professions Council**, which regulates chiropodists and physiotherapists, and which has powers to investigate complaints and administer sanctions. Draft legislation to register psychologists was

laid before Parliament last month. The plans are supported by the **British Psychoanalytic Council** which has condemned what it describes as "a strident campaign by a small group of therapists and counsellors against statutory regulation".

Peter Fonagy, professor of psychoanalysis at University College, London, said: "Most practitioners have come across individuals who have been inappropriately treated by fellow therapists. This kind of action must not be allowed to undermine public confidence in psychotherapy. Evidence shows increasingly clearly that therapy and counselling are among the most effective treatments for psychological disorder and are growing rapidly in popularity. We need a transparent and independent system which allows clients' voices to be heard if they feel their therapy has been inadequate or inappropriate."

Against this view, the **Alliance for Counselling and Psychotherapy** has attacked the Government's proposals as "singularly inappropriate" and claims they will "perpetrate net damage to the field". More than 2,000 therapists have signed a petition opposing the plans.

In a statement, the Alliance said regulation would "medicalise the field, rigidify training and inflate the cost of therapy, reducing access". Any attempt to make therapy conform to a "safety-first" culture would "degrade the quality of help offered".

Supporters of the Alliance include Professors Andrew Samuels of the University of Essex, Brian Thorne of the University of East Anglia and Haya Oakley, former honorary secretary of the **UK Council for Psychotherapy**.

In their statement, they say: "Many if not most practitioners see their work as more an art than a science. Any attempt to impose a quasi-objective framework of standards and competencies not only stifles creativity but also damages therapeutic work with the client. Applying a predetermined set of external principles means overriding the client's individuality. This is ethically unacceptable as well as therapeutically ineffective."

Psychotherapy has always been riven by schisms, since the split between Freud and Jung. An umbrella body, the UK Council of Psychotherapy, was established in 1982 to promote self-regulation but it has since splintered and is challenged by rival organisation the British Psychoanalytic Council.

Regulators have faced the daunting task of drawing up guidelines for therapy, to set a benchmark against which misconduct can be judged. The early efforts of a quango called **Skills of Health**, commissioned to make the first attempt, have not been encouraging. A draft of more than 450 rules produced last year included one requiring therapists to "identify the client's response to your use of silence", which is counter to the teachings of Freud and others. Another instructed therapists to seek "feedback" about the helpfulness or otherwise of an interpretation. One body, the **Psychoanalytic Consortium**, rejected that by declaring therapy was "not about making an evaluation

of service, as in a pizza restaurant".

The regulators' difficulty is that they are attempting to police private conversations between two people which are freely entered into and which happen behind closed doors. Some professionals think they are foolish even to try.

The Health Professions Council said it was expected psychologists would be registered this summer and legislation to regulate psychotherapists would be introduced under a "further order". www.allianceforcandp.org

ALLIANCE UK CONFERENCE

For those of you that might be in the UK in May:

State Regulation of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Risks and Realities

A Regional Conference for Sussex and the South East, Saturday 9th May 2pm – 6pm

The government plan to regulate counselling and psychotherapy through the Health Professions Council. This conference introduces the newly formed Alliance for Counselling & Psychotherapy and addresses the following issues:

- What's actually happening?
- Principled objections
- How will it affect my practice?
- What can I do about it?

Gather from 1.30pm at the 'As You Are Centre'

45 Southwick Street, Southwick, West Sussex, BN42 4TH

No need to book a place – just turn up on the day.

Cost: suggested minimum contribution of £5, payable on the day

For more info contact: Nicky Hitchcock on 07952 7548