

INTRODUCTION

Psychotherapy – a new profession

This is a very exciting time for psychotherapy. The field is developing and expanding. It has been well over half a century since we have seen such a burgeoning of ideas.

In writing this short introduction we want to provide a map of the field and focus on some of the key areas of growth. For many psychotherapists, introductory books like this one were thin on the ground when we set out on our own journey to qualification. At that time one of the best ways to find out about psychotherapy was to try a weekend workshop or join a group. The human potential movement which started in earnest in the 1960s gave unrivalled access to gaining first hand experiential knowledge. ‘Taste it and see’ was a prevailing culture. In many ways this is probably still the best way to decide what feels right.

We hope that this introduction, like any short guide, will give you an overview of some of the important areas and a chance to find out more about them. All the authors are seasoned psychotherapists with years of experience under their belts. As practitioners in the field they bring hands-on knowledge and a real understanding of the depth and breadth of psychotherapeutic practice.

Structure

Chapters cover key areas of knowledge and practice ranging from theory to future developments in the field.

Chapter 1 looks at the fascinating historical weavings of theory and practice, practitioner and client. It is a brief but scholarly overview of developments in the field from Freud to the present day.

Chapter 2 considers applications of psychotherapy looking at a selection of schools and modalities in greater depth and comparing and contrasting some of these.

Chapter 3 considers the evidence base and points to the need for a full understanding of what research means in the psychotherapeutic therapeutic sphere. It considers different approaches to psychotherapy research and what these yield.

Chapter 4 critiques the field and takes an honest look at the profession.

Chapter 5 looks at psychotherapy practice in the NHS and includes some brief case studies.

Chapter 6 gives a breakdown of what is involved in training as a psychotherapist and describes in detail the path to qualification.

Finally chapter 7 looks to future trends and developments in the field and emphasises the need for new approaches to practise to meet increasingly diverse social needs.

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