

Newsletter from Switzerland

In Switzerland three different languages are used, spoken in different areas: the German, the French and the Italian speaking regions. All these areas contain different cultural and scientific influences even in the field of psychoanalysis and group analysis. On one hand this heterogeneity leads to a fruitful dynamic in all aspects of the social and political life – on the other hand it causes also difficulties of understanding each other. With regard to group analysis the German speaking part is more orientated towards the northern European developments whereas in the French part the developments of France are more integrated. These differences are not only differences in language but also differences in concepts. Concerning group analysis in the Italian speaking part the professionals are orientated either to the German or the French-speaking colleagues. According to these orientations Switzerland knows two organisations for group analysis or psychoanalytic group psychotherapy.

In the German speaking part the existing training institutes in group analysis are organised within *EFPP Deutsche Schweiz Gruppensektion*; in the French speaking part, group analysis is represented in *ARPAG* (Association Romande pour la Psychothérapie de Groupe). The professionals in the Italian speaking part are individually organised in one of these organisations.

Both organisations are part of EFPP Group Section. Each organisation selects one delegate for EFPP. Below each organisation is presented separately.

Group Section EFPP Switzerland German Speaking Part

The section includes approximatively 50 members. They are members of three different Institutes for group analysis in Switzerland:

- SGAZ: Seminar für Gruppenanalyse Zürich,
- Bodensee: Institut für Gruppenanalyse Bodensee,
- AGOG: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Operative Gruppen, Zürich.

All these institutes provide different certificates for group analysis compatible with EFPP standards. SGAZ and IG Bodensee are members of EGATIN. In 2011 SGAZ has got the national approbation.

All institutes offer different programmes of training and of postgraduate meetings. EFPP Switzerland Group Section provides a certain coordinating and informing role. EFPP Switzerland Group Section coordinates specific political actions in psychotherapy and psychiatry together with EFPP Switzerland. In 2011 EFPP Switzerland Group Section and ARPAG organised a common scientific meeting to discuss the common ground and differences in our approaches to group analysis.

In Switzerland the political situation for psychotherapy is changing. New guidelines for psychotherapy and for the approbation of institutes will be implemented. Group analysis is regarded as a specific application of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. It is regarded as a scientifically approved method.

Services for psychotherapy are provided by public health services and by psychiatrist and psychotherapists in private practice. All are covered by the same national insurances. So far psychological psychotherapists are only covered by the national insurance scheme if they offer psychotherapy delegated by psychiatrists. The National Health Board communicated that it wishes to change this system into a direct mode of provisions by psychological psychotherapists.

Since 2007 psychotherapy covered by the national health insurance is restricted. The first 40 sessions of psychotherapy are without any restriction and patients are free to choose the therapist. Psychotherapy longer than 40 sessions must be approved by the medical department of the insurance. Principally psychotherapy may last 300 sessions but the rigid system of reports after each period of 40 sessions diminishes the lengths of therapies. This system is also implemented for group psychotherapy and it means that therapists have to write each year (after 40 sessions of group therapy) a report to the insurance.

Psychoanalytical psychotherapy is under strong pressure proving its scientific evidence and acceptable cost benefit ratios. In Switzerland so far psychoanalytic psychotherapy has a good acceptance and established its position in the health field. This recognition is due to an active engagement of EFPP Switzerland in health politics.

Group Section EFPP Switzerland French Speaking Part (ARPAG)

This section includes 90 members (MD, psychologists) who are all recognized as psychotherapists by the State. None of them practice only group therapy, but also individual, couple, and family therapy.

The institute is in function since 14 years and delivered about 100 diplomas. The institute collaborate with other institutes, also supported partly by EFPP Switzerland, to provide a certificate compatible with EFPP standards. These standards should however be regularly discussed to be adapted to the reality of practice in whole Europe.

The institute published a collective book: *Figures du groupe psychanalytique*, (Médecine et Hygiène, Genève, 2006) and is preparing a second book for 2015.

The practice of groups in our region is mostly that of children and adolescents. And the technique uses often psychodrama (a technique also trained in our institute). The practice would probably develop if we obtain from our government directives that group are differently paid than simply by dividing the fees between participants; it is not

recognized that group practice necessitates a special big room and that the meetings are much more difficult to organize than individual meetings

Report for EFPP Gruppensektion Deutsche Schweiz: Rudolf Balmer

Report for ARPAG : Olivier Bonard

References:

Rudolf Balmer (2008) Die Entwicklung der Gruppenanalyse in der Schweiz, in Gfäller F.: Die Entwicklung der Gruppenanalyse in den deutschsprachigen Ländern.