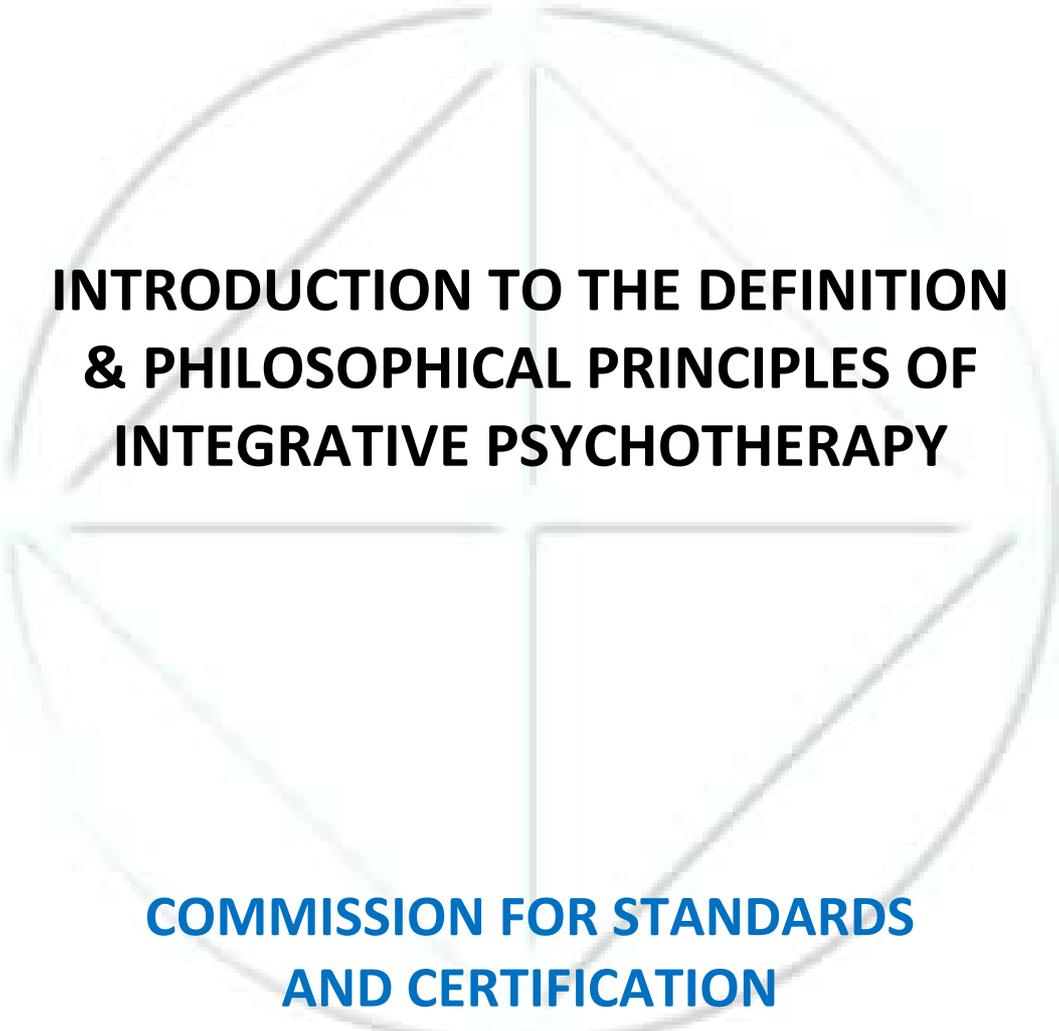


International Integrative Psychotherapy Association

-IIPA-

www.integrativeassociation.com



**INTRODUCTION TO THE DEFINITION
& PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF
INTEGRATIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY**

**COMMISSION FOR STANDARDS
AND CERTIFICATION**

-CSC-

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEFINITION & PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRATIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY

Document Goals

This document will:

- explain the reasons behind the foundations to the International Integrative Psychotherapy Association (IIPA) processes of evaluation and certification.
- clarify the philosophy and the style of the evaluation procedures.

The Integrative Psychotherapy Philosophical Principles

The philosophical principles of Integrative Psychotherapy (IP) originated from philosophical Existentialism. The eight principles are fundamental assumptions that reflect the basis for our therapeutic interventions when we engage in a relationally focused psychotherapy. This therapy, considers the relationship between client and therapist as essential for healing and personal growth. These philosophical assumptions influence the vision, the therapeutic approach and the interactions with clients.

They also represent a lifestyle and an attitude that is reflected through the involvement in the therapeutic relationship; the therapist keeps them in mind in order to provide a real welcome to the client and a sense of connection.

Each of these principles forms the underlying basis to determine which concepts and theories can be integrated effectively and how we sculpt our psychotherapy practice.

1. *All people are equally valuable.*
2. *All human experience is organized physiologically, affectively and/or cognitively.*
3. *All human behavior has meaning in some context.*
4. *Internal and external contact is essential for human functioning.*
5. *All people are relationship-seeking and interdependent throughout life.*
6. *Humans have an innate thrust to grow.*
7. *Humans suffer from relational disruptions not “psychopathology”.*
8. *The inter-subjective process of psychotherapy is more important than the content of the psychotherapy.*¹

¹ R.Erskine, "Vulnerability, Authenticity, and Inter-subjective Contact: Philosophical Principles of Integrative Psychotherapy", March 2013.

The eight philosophical principles are the foundation stones on which we build the theories and the methods of a relationally focused integrative psychotherapy. They provide the basis for deciding which specific concepts and ideas can be integrated with the core relational theories of motivation, personal life function, and methods. To be thoroughly integrative each theory, concept, and set of methods must dovetail with the fundamental philosophical principles.

A brief history

The Commission for Standards and Certification was created in 2005, in Santiago de Compostela, where a group of IIPA founding members realized that the Integrative Association was going to be developed and that integrative theory and methods would be taught and used internationally.

The main goal was to create a committee that would work to ensure the coherence between the Integrative Psychotherapy theory, methods and philosophical principles and the application of them in any further training programs and accreditation processes, in all countries and under different conditions.

This manual of Training and Standards is the result of an ongoing project. The purpose is to develop a reflective relational process on the philosophy, theory and methods of IP in order to realize a common training and supervising activity that could be demonstrated in an evaluation and certification process.

The certification processes are an instrument to support the trainee to develop her or his personal way to become a competent psychotherapist or counselor, who can show they really understand and assimilate in depth the core IP concepts and relational skills. This process, according with the principles of the IP, will respect the unique, individual style of the trainee. The integration of the cognitive, affective, physiology and behavior domains will be taken into account in the process of teaching, learning and evaluating.

The same goal, will be clear in the processes for becoming an international trainer and supervisor. This process should be characterized by the constant respect and attuned way of teaching and supervising her or his trainees, acknowledging and respecting their own particular characteristics and responding to their stages of professional development.

The Commission has designed 3 different processes:

1. The Certification of Integrative Psychotherapist (CIP) or Counsellor (CIC)

An evaluation process that offers respect, attunement and feedback according to our philosophical principles, allowing the candidate to express her or his own specific way of being an integrative psychotherapist/counselor.

The central task of this process is to work as colleagues invested in the mutual and relational learning process, where the welfare and the growth of the members of the evaluation experience is central. The feedback and respectful suggestions, along with involvement and at-tuned inquiry will be the core of the evaluation methods.

2. The Future Trainer Workshop (FTW)

An ongoing process through the attendance at workshops during the IIPA bi-annual conference. The candidates will have the chance to discuss and share their perspective, methods, principles and ideas with other colleagues that are involved in the same path and with the participation, feedback and experience of the certified IP trainers and supervisors.²

To be able to attend the FTW, the candidate has to enter a specific training and supervision process with a main supervisor and candidate sponsor.

3. The Trainer and Supervisor Certification

A process of evaluation as a trainer and supervisor in a relational setting, where the IP training and supervision experience of the candidate is shared and discussed with other colleagues, as a relational process of teaching, supervising and learning.

The skills of the candidate are shown in a context of reciprocal feedback, where the commitment with their own personal and professional excellence is honored and valued. The IP learning philosophy is a project of mutual teaching and learning experience both for the candidates and for the colleagues, trainers and supervisors, who participate in the evaluation process.

The accreditation as an IIPA certified member (in any type of accreditation) operates as long as the person is member of IIPA and is engaged in an ongoing IP supervision process and in a personal therapy process.

Certification is not a goal in itself, it is the result of an ongoing process, which is why it takes place during the IIPA bi-annual conference to which all candidates are strongly invited to participate.

Integrative Psychotherapy Definition

As a Commission for Standards and Certification, it is important for us to keep in mind Richard Erskine Integrative Psychotherapy definition and to put its philosophical principles into actions throughout the certification and evaluation activities.

The Integrative Psychotherapy is a relational psychotherapy in full contact². It is built on and consists of philosophical principles, theory and methods. The term «Integrative» refers to these three aspects.

2 "The "integrative" of Integrative Psychotherapy has multiple meanings. It refers, first, to the process of integrating the personality: helping the client to assimilate and harmonize the contents of his or her ego states, relax the defence mechanisms, relinquish the script, and reengage the world with full contact. It is the process of making whole: taking disowned, unaware, unresolved aspects of the ego and making them part of a cohesive self. Through integration, it becomes possible for people to have the courage to face each moment openly and freshly, without the protection of a performed opinion, position, attitude, or expectation"

The first aspect is the integration of concepts of different theoretical approaches. The integration of these approaches is made taking into account:

- the natural development of the person.
- the individual need of relationship.
- the philosophical principles of Integrative Psychotherapy.

The concepts or parts of concepts that were "borrowed" from other theories and integrated are mostly re-elaborated, specified, processed and or used differently. The Integrative Psychotherapy is thus unified and constitutes a specific theory with specific therapeutic methods ³.

The second aspect of the term «Integrative» refers to the integration of the client. Through the process of the psychotherapy, the client appropriates and integrates forgotten parts of self, which they were not consciously in contact with and which limits their welfare and psychological, physiological, and relational equilibrium. These aspects of self are inappropriate in the present, unconscious and unresolved will be integrated to belong to a Self in cohesion ⁴.

The third aspect of the term «Integrative» refers to the integration of the psychotherapist, counsellor, trainer or supervisor.

The integration of the professional in Integrative Psychotherapy concerns its own integration of the theoretical corpus (theory, methods and philosophical principles) in contact and in connection with the integration of her or his own experiences as an adult and as a child, and her or his experiences of the professional that she or he is.

The professional and personal growth is linked to this integration, which is a lifelong process. Continuing to integrate her/his knowledge, her/his know-how and her/his "know how to be", she/he can be present with her/his client and engage in full contact in the therapeutic relationship with her/him.

³ "We based our approach on two fundamental principles. One of these principles is that all aspects of human functioning –affect, behavior, cognition, physiology– are interdependent and mutually causative. The second is that relationship is the very stuff of being human, and that human activity can only be understood in the context of relationship". (Erskine R, *Integrative Psychotherapy in Action: The Art and Science of Relationship*, p 9.2004).

"Integrative" also refers to the integration of theory, the bringing together of affective, cognitive, behavioral, physiological, and systems approaches to psychotherapy. The concepts are utilized within a perspective of human development in which each phase of life presents heightened developmental tasks, need sensitivities, crises, and opportunities for new learning. Integrative psychotherapy takes into account many views of human functioning: psychodynamic, client centered, behaviorist, family therapy, Gestalt therapy, neo-Reichian, object relations theories, psychoanalytic self psychology, and transactional analysis. Each provides a valid explanation of behavior, and each is enhanced when selectively integrated with the others". The psychotherapeutic interventions are based on research-validated knowledge of normal developmental process and the theories describing the self-protective defensive processes used when there are interruptions in normal development (Erskine, R., (*Integrative Psychotherapy in Action*. P,40, 1988).

⁴ "Integrative Psychotherapy is a relationally focused method. We help the client to integrate his or her self: to bring back to awareness the sensations, the responses, the abilities, the hopes and the dreams and fears and fantasies that were split off and driven underground as a result of acute or cumulative trauma. In short, integrations means becoming whole again, with full access to all that one is and may become."