

Thoughts and Experiences described by Jocelyne Quennell on the Statutory Regulation of Psychotherapy with the Health Professions Council.

Introduction

In this short paper I have outlined my own experience and summarised in twelve points why I think HPC regulation could be of value to the Profession of Psychotherapy today.

My History of Experience as a Regulated Practitioner

I am moved to write as an individual on the subject of statutory regulation with the Health Professions Council (HPC), as I have direct personal and professional experience of what this actually means in practice. I am currently regulated by the HPC and I have had nothing but positive experience as a practitioner since registration with them. I am an Integrative Arts Psychotherapist who has been a UKCP delegate for the Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education for over twelve years.

In the early nineties the profession of Art Therapists of which I have always been a part applied to the HPC to become regulated for many reasons which we felt would strengthen and enhance the profile of public service delivery. The Arts Therapies worked together across the art modalities to secure generic training standards that would be relevant across all theoretical orientations and approach. This task is very similar to what the UKCP has accomplished over many years as the only multi-modal regulatory authority in the professions of psychological therapies today. The Arts Therapies professions were successful in their efforts to secure the delivery of a field of ideas and practices for future generations and trainings have proliferated across the UK.

The Arts Therapies like the Humanistic tradition in Psychotherapy had much to do with the anti-psychiatry movement and it was important for them to establish themselves as having credibility and professionalism in their own right outside of a medical model whilst at the same time being able to work in a complementary way with health and social care professionals of every kind. If we wanted to grow and plant ourselves firmly in statutory services we believed that we needed to evidence transparency and accountability in all that we delivered. These two words are what have been the stated defining values and principles of the UKCP for many years. The Arts Therapies achieved this with the HPC with the aims of securing pay scales and employment prospects for all Arts Therapists for the future.

Regulation with the HPC has enabled me to feel greater confidence and pride in my method and approach knowing that it is recognised and understood by people everywhere. Of course, like everyone else, we could do with more jobs and we need to stand up politically to trends in the Department for Health (DH) that wish to restrict practices under the auspices of Increasing

Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT). I think we need to be with the HPC to make an impact on this situation.

The Arts Therapies are undoubtedly rooted in depth-psychologies which are often defined as those which include the unconscious which is filled with the adventures of self discovery and voyages into the unknown. That is what has always made the fields of psychotherapies so exciting and cutting-edge to inhabit. With HPC regulation I have felt no sense of restriction or 'government control' or indeed any kind of imposition on the freedom of my thinking, theory, philosophy or practice or indeed perhaps even more importantly the inner life of the people I have sought to serve. To the contrary I have felt ever greater dignity and respect for what I do, believe in and advocate as a vital and necessary means of psychological reflection and analysis within a discipline that requires both humility and compassion.

The Health Professions Council Statutory Regulation of Integrative Arts Psychotherapy at the Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education

I was formerly the Principal of the Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education where I was based for fifteen years supporting the development of courses in Emotional Literacy, Creativity and Imagination, Integrative Arts Psychotherapy, Integrative Child Psychotherapy, Child Therapeutic Counselling and Adolescent Therapeutic Counselling. I worked in conjunction with the London Metropolitan University and have been responsible for the delivery of Masters Degree-level psychotherapy trainings.

It was in my post here that I decided to take IATE forward as the first UKCP recognised Arts Psychotherapy training to be regulated with the HPC. We thought carefully as a whole organisation and decided to go forward with an application quite simply because we felt it would be advantageous for our graduates in the workplace in applying for jobs. This was the beginning of embarking on a journey that proved to be both developmental and consolidating.

How did I experience the HPC?

Having agreed to apply for regulation for one of our courses the HPC staff worked closely with us and made sure that all the criteria for assessment were made available so that we were not in the dark about anything. They gave us excellent consultation about what we would need to produce to evidence that we were 'fit for purpose'. I discovered that the issues they were particularly interested in were those that I was really interested in myself. They focused on the quality of experience of students and staff in the organisation. They wanted to be sure that students were well supported in their placements and in their studies. They were also concerned that graduates would be ready for the challenges of professional life in the statutory sector with reference to inter-disciplinary team work, anti-discriminatory practice, equal opportunities and ethics generally. They cared that on behalf of students we had good systems to ensure students' voices were respected and they wanted to be sure there was fair play in the delivery of courses with reference to covering the necessary and appropriate curriculum with

parity of practice. It mattered to them that students had access to library facilities, relevant books and journals as well as appropriate assessment methods which gave all students the opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. They were respectful of the work that students and graduates delivered in the private and voluntary sector and they in no way tried to control the course content and delivery on the basis of their own agenda with reference to theory, philosophy or practice. They were interested in how we approached the teaching of research methods and how we actively fostered a research culture in the organisation that was interested in practice-based evidence and evidence-based practice, without being prescriptive or restrictive about the ways in which we met these criteria.

The Impact of the HPC on IATE's Training Course

We made a few minor modifications in a couple of areas that were not difficult and had little overall impact. For example we needed to include in two assessments a specification for visual art media to be included as we were to be regulated as Art Psychotherapists. As nine times out of ten this was the case anyway it caused no harm. They asked us to develop a handbook for placements which turned out to be very useful to everyone and we took on a placement officer to ensure that all our placements were carefully managed and monitored. I think this enhanced the student's experience of their initial clinical experience and meant they were much better supported in this aspect of their course. I found that IATE was pleased to share with them our philosophy and values as a person-centred and process oriented experiential training course. The HPC wrote commendations about our codes of ethics, conduct and practice, criteria for assessment and specialist considerations for working with children.

It was familiar in much the same way as all our work with the University and the HPC suggested that they combine their ongoing visits with the University re-validations in future to streamline and make manageable the workloads involved. They were rigorous and professional in every respect and I have no hesitation in recommending them as a regulator for the field of psychotherapy.

Visit the Health Professions Council www.hpc-uk.org

Last year I went to visit the HPC as they have an open and transparent policy which means that visitors can come and watch the council in action. I first went at a time when I was concerned that Integrative-Humanistic Psychotherapy was to be excluded from the Skills for Health mapping process. I found it very reassuring that they were informed about this and cared in principle because matters of equal opportunity are at the heart of their values and endeavour. Anna Van der Gaag is the current chair of the Council and she spoke so respectfully of the alternative therapies whose conference she had visited recently at their request. I visited the Council again and was able to gain even more insight into the culture and how it functions in an atmosphere of inter-collegial respect and collaboration across different disciplines all working together to provide an efficient and effective service to their registrants.

Professor Diane Waller is Chair of the Programme Liaison Group (PLG) responsible for the development of psychotherapy regulation and if you would like to gain an audio glimpse of her speaking on the subject of patient choice visit

www.newsavoypartnership.org/2008conference.htm Session Audio “How to square the circle of patient choice and evidence-based treatment”

Here you will find her raising very important questions and maintaining scepticism as well as optimism with reference to IAPT. She discusses the value of irrational choices and the culture of Brighton where she lives which is particularly receptive to the upsurge of alternative therapies. She is also a member of the philosophy group at the Mental Health Providers Forum (MHPF) where a campaign is underway to expand the research methods approved by NICE. Also see the HIPS Political Group report on how the difficulties in Skills for Health have been addressed successfully. Integrative-Humanistic psychotherapy is now well represented in the mapping process and both competencies and National Occupational Standards can be found at www.skillsforhealth.org.uk . Integrative-Humanistic Psychotherapy can be understood to be holistic in that it works with affective, cognitive, behavioural, physiological, transpersonal and contextual aspects of the person and their life experience.

Why Do I think the Health Professions Council will be good for the Profession of Psychotherapy.

I have been the UKCP Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy Section Political Co-ordinator for the last two years and so I have researched in detail the overall political context that Psychotherapy finds itself in today. I come from a tradition in psychotherapy that values individual subjectivity and personhood and so I wish to speak from that in expressing my own personal and professional opinions here. No-one knows what will actually happen in the future and we cannot read the tea leaves on these matters but using my direct experience, thoughts, feelings and intuition I have evaluated the situation and formed views of my own. My own views, opinions and concerns are as follows:

1. The Health Professions Council is an efficient, safe and effective regulatory authority that is willing to work developmentally with the profession of psychotherapy and to reflect critically on itself, being open to change if and when necessary.
2. The field of psychotherapy has so much to offer our society at this time and in order to get this work ‘out there’ into the world we need to evidence that we are accountable to statutory standards and requirements in the delivery of trainings in psychotherapy.
3. The threat to patient choice posed by IAPT and the low-grade CBT hegemony which espouses standardised, manualised styles of applied technique administered by people with minimal training is very serious indeed. The NICE Guidelines need collective and coherent political engagement from everyone at every level in order to ensure that psychological therapies can evolve their own research methodology for evaluation of efficacy. If we do not have statutory regulation it would weaken our position substantially. With the HPC we have the chance to earn greater respect for our

increased levels of accountability and to work together as professions who are responsible for delivering psychological therapies.

4. I believe that statutory regulation will enhance our credibility and therefore job prospects in the future particularly if enough people are willing to do the work to engage with research and make known to the world through a wide range of research methods how exceptional and indeed crucial is the contribution that psychotherapy can make to society.
5. I am concerned that any absence or avoidance of statutory regulation will lead to a lack of respect for the profession with reference to transparency and accountability and with that the possibility of the discrediting of all of our psychological approaches.
6. I am concerned that the many doors that we have opened and are opening with reference to inter-disciplinary collaboration and exchange with policy makers across government agencies will not remain open if we were to try to close ourselves off from public and government scrutiny.
7. I would be concerned that people in our field may become demoralised and lose confidence without the psychological support of government recognition.
8. I am concerned that diversity in the field would not be preserved because if the above mentioned were true, people would not feel reassured in applying to trainings that could not guarantee them any public or government respect or credibility to work or apply for jobs in public services.
9. The HPC offers psychotherapy a non-partisan pluralistic framework for regulation and my concern would be that if we were to lose this opportunity for whatever reason we could become like other European Countries where only Medical Doctors and Clinical Psychologists could be described by the title Psychotherapist.
10. I have found myself these last twenty years in a profession steeped in prejudice, discrimination, fundamentalism, a lack of equal opportunities, and a profound disrespect for difference. I have worked in the UKCP with many of the noblest people in our field towards effecting change in these areas particularly with reference to cultural diversity. I think HPC regulation will help this cause.
11. I have been committed to the aim of taking Therapy into Education for twenty years. I am the Clinical Director for Kids Company Schools Programme where we are working with nearly thirteen thousand children and young people in London who are traumatised, abused and neglected as well as promoting emotional literacy for all. I think that we need statutory regulation to get serious about working effectively in schools so that we can give the next generation the quality of psychological care they are going to need to survive the threats of crime, violence, drugs and mental illness that we are witnessing today. Education, like Health and Social Services, is a statutory agency and therefore governments need to be assured of statutory requirements in training being met to enter into effective public-private partnerships with graduate professionals.
12. I like the HPC and after careful consideration over many years of working in the field of professional politics and psychotherapy I think we actually need to be regulated by them.

