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Main Themes

Future perspectives of existential therapy

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Title

Neuroscience & Existential Psychotherapy; A Facet of the Mind-Body Connection

Abstract for

Short Communication

Abstract

Psychotherapy is considered an art of science, incorporating psychology and philosophy, while neuroscience engages in understanding the physiological and neurobiological basis of the human condition (Balogh et al., 2021). Even though they both deal with the human brain, cognition and behavior, they continue to stay polarized and engaged in a never-ending tug-of-war that elongates the mind-body chasm, instead of narrowing it by working together. While art can represent subjectivity and science objectivity, both are always present creating a dynamism, with existential psychotherapy attempting on manifesting and blending this duality with an artistic mastery (Bugental, 1987). Integrating neuroscientific understanding in existential psychotherapeutic practices can lead us into a new direction of the mind-body connection that enhances mental health treatment and understanding.

References

Balogh, L., Tanaka, M., Török, N., Vécsei, L., & Taguchi, S. (2021). Crosstalk between Existential Phenomenological Psychotherapy and Neurological Sciences in Mood and Anxiety Disorders. *Biomedicines*, 9(4), 340. <https://doi.org/10.3390/biomedicines9040340>

Bugental, J.F. (1987). *The Art of the Psychotherapist*. Norton.

Brief bio-bibliographical note:

My name is Despoina (Deppie) Georgakopoulou Toli and I am originally from Greece. I was awarded my BSc with a major in Neuroscience from Dalhousie University (Canada) and I am a certified MBSR Facilitator (CMS, Canada). I am currently completing my fourth and final year of existential psychotherapeutic training at Gignesthai (Hellenic Association of Existential Psychology, Greece). I have a private practice in Athens, while also volunteering as an existential psychotherapist (in training) at EPAPSY (Association for Regional Development and Mental Health, Greece). I was a researcher and author for University of California San Francisco (UCSF, USA) “A mindfulness-based intervention adapted to dementia caregivers: A study protocol for a randomized clinical control trial” (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9808397/>), were I co-created and co-facilitated the tailored version of MBSR for dementia caregivers. I was also a speaker at the 3rd World Congress of Existential Therapy (2023) (“Cultivating a Mindful Presence in the Here & Now for the Existential Therapist”).

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