

NATIONAL NETWORKS

Introduction

Since the inception of the EFPP, 30 years ago, it was thought that the National Network is the most suitable and effective model of organization through which member countries and their respective organizations should be anchored in the European Federation. The National Network was deemed to be the best possible structure to develop and pursue the objectives and the Ethos of the EFPP (Article 6 of the constitution). It corresponds in short, to the promotion, enhancement, development and anchoring of psychoanalytic psychotherapy and its corresponding training bodies in the four constituent EFPP Sections (modalities) as they are reflected in the public as well as in private settings.

Membership of EFPP hence comes via the National Networks. The Federation does not recognise membership of individual clinicians. It recognizes psychoanalytic organisations of four different psychoanalytic modalities from European countries and holds to the principles of forging these organisations into national networks. Each of the four recognized EFPP psychoanalytic modalities has approved training standards and a clinical and organisational ethical code to adhere by.

The guiding principle of all national networks is that cohesion and togetherness allow for a greater scope of developing and promoting as well as defending psychoanalytic psychotherapy in its diverse applications in the competitive market place of today's mental health environment. The container of the national network allows more effectively to provide scientific arguments in relation to evidence and efficacy for its clinical model in the public arena and for political argument. As a cohesive professional body of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, it has a far greater chance of staking its legitimate claim in the field of national mental health and be recognized by the public as a true alternative to proposed treatment models for mental suffering.

The democratic principle of the federation finds representation in the EFPP through delegates, selected by the respective national network. Delegates participate on behalf of their national network in the decision-making processes of the federation in biennial delegates meetings and function as the conduit between national network and federation and vice versa. This democratic principle also applies to the associations or membership institutions of the national network. It stands to reason that the national network selects delegates for the different psychoanalytic modalities from the pool of its membership institutions. It is then one of the responsibilities of the selected delegates, to foster ever closer relationships between the associations of the national network.

Development of the topic

Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy is a treatment modality that has a long history and is rooted in the theoretical and clinical application of S. Freud, M. Klein, W.R. Bion and many others. Originally conceptualized as a treatment for adults, suffering from mental pain, with time this led to the development of diverse clinical applications, including the treatment of children and adolescents, couples and families as well as the usefulness of group-practice. The different psychoanalytic applications are today a proven practice to alleviate mental distress and suffering. The EFPP takes account of this and brings the principal four modalities of psychoanalytic psychotherapy together under one umbrella. The common thread is psychoanalytic theory and practice.

With new and different approaches to mental health emerging on the market all the time, psychoanalytic psychotherapy needs strengthening, promoting and defending. The solidarity and cooperation among the various psychoanalytic psychotherapy associations in one country creates a cohesive presentation of psychoanalytic thinking in the public. It is an effective way of promoting the evidence and efficacy of the treatment model for public awareness. This is the core rationale for the national network and for the EFPP.

The EFPP functions as the guardian and protector of minimum training standards and the ethical codes as they are anchored in the bylaws of the EFPP constitution. The national network and its constituent membership institutions adhere to its designated training standards and agrees to protect them within the four existing diverse modalities of

psychoanalytic psychotherapy of the Federation. It does not inhibit the national network from applying higher training standards within its network but it is the EFPP standards that are relevant for membership in the federation.

The EFPP views the architecture of the national networks as that of a collaborative system. National networks are composed of collegiate organizations that foster mutual recognition, respect and support amongst each other. All those psychoanalytic organisations in a country that fulfil the EFPP standards and adhere to its Ethical Code participate in a network on the basis of solidarity, mutual support and tolerance. The EFPP is then the platform that unites all the associated members of the national networks under its umbrella and in its international orbit.

The national network stimulates the dynamic interchange, communication, cooperation and enhances collaboration and exchange among psychoanalytic psychotherapists and their professional bodies. It strengthens the profession as a whole as well as fostering awareness amongst other professionals, administrators, legislators and of course the public.

This model of organization stresses both the autonomy and independence as well as the diversity and individuality of each association. By the same token, it also stresses the importance of shared objectives and communal space with a view of a common purpose, defined by the EFPP Ethos and its requirements.

The national networks preserve the identity and the belonging of the individual clinician to his/her training organisation i.e individual association. The belonging to the alma mater of the individual training organisation itself, should be no hindrance to the experience of belonging to a national network, which in turn belongs to an international European organisation, the EFPP. We might see this as representing different levels of belonging that in its togetherness strengthens the identity of the single association as well as that of the individual clinician.

The uniqueness of the EFPP as an umbrella organisation is that it holds 4 different psychoanalytic modalities under one roof. This allows for an ongoing dialogue amongst the different psychoanalytic approaches and in so doing strengthens psychoanalytic theory and practice. The motto could be described as "in pluribus unum".

The national network fosters a sense of cooperation, openness, tolerance and mutual support. The cooperation that it fosters is designed to overcome and prevent the isolation of an individual professional entity and its continuing professional development. In promoting a national and international outlook, it strengthens critical debate and prevents the stagnation of the individual associations. The shared international engagement within the EFPP helps to maintain openness towards developments in the profession in various membership countries and in turn allows to reflect and deal with the shared issues of the associations in the national network.

National networks allow horizontal links among its constituent members organisations in recognising cultural variety and differences in theoretical inflections and clinical practice as well as appreciating the size of the respective association. The currency of these links is tolerance and respect. It is mindful of authoritarianism and anti-democratic tendencies as well as the abuse of power and authority by one association over the other. As stated above, the democratic process embedded in the EFPP is a model also for the functioning of the national network.

Procedure

It is important to understand the procedural dynamic that lead to the development of a national network. This is not a rigid formula and depends on multiple national factors as well as historical realities.

The first applicant association of a country for membership of the EFPP that can derive from any one of the four recognized modalities or sections, or indeed from a combination of some of them or all of them. It is the nucleus and starting point of a national network. It is then designated and takes on responsibility as an anchor for all those future EFPP applicants from within the same country.

In terms of procedure of application, it therefore stands to reason that any new applicant from any of the four recognized EFPP sections within a country, applies for EFPP membership via the existing National Network. It can be assumed and is very likely, that an established organisation, hence in EFPP terms, the established national network, is familiar with the development of the professional situation in the individual country. As a member of the EFPP it is familiar with the EFPP standards and requirements and is therefore best placed to process any new application for membership of the EFPP in good faith. The designated national network organisation(s) must operate as honest brokers between the

new applicant and the Federation. Professional rivalries must be secondary to the merit of the applicants wish to become a recognized member of the EFPP.

The new applicant association does not have to be a member of any existing association of the network. It just has to fulfil EFPP criteria when applying for membership, but will be a potential future member in the collegiate system of the national network, if its application to the EFPP is successful.

Once the application has been scrutinized for merit by the existing national network it will be forwarded to the EFPP section chair of the relevant modality and presented to the EFPP board for approval. Should an applicant to an existing national network be rejected by them, the applying organisation has the right to appeal to the EFPP section chair and for the case to be presented to the EFPP board for adjudication.

The existing association/national network may have higher standards than those the EFPP requires; however, the new applicant will be measured by the EFPP standards as they are laid out in the bylaws.

The national network might also encourage associate membership of organisations that might aspire to EFPP standards but might not yet be able to fulfil the relevant criteria.

Applications

1. In countries with already existing national EFPP networks, applications for EFPP membership will be processed at the level of that National Network, which will then contact the Board for a final approval.
2. In countries without National EFPP Network, applications for EFPP membership have to go to the EFPP section chair, who will scrutinize the application for its merits and present the application to the Board for a final approval.

Conclusions

The National Network is not an abstract concept. It is a reality that implies tolerance, movement, transformations and continuous adaptation as the realities change.

The rhythm and stages of development of national networks varies in the different countries, due to a multiplicity of factors. One important aspect is that psychoanalytic psychotherapy as a method to alleviate mental suffering, encounters different degrees of acceptance in different European societies. The profession is regulated very tightly in some European countries but not in others. Therapy is in some European countries financed by the relevant national health system while in other countries the patient has to carry the finance the cost of therapy from private resources.

These are just some examples that illustrate the importance that through the cohesiveness and solidarity of the profession, representation can be made to the public at large, to government departments and health insurance providers.

In this sense the unity of psychoanalytic psychotherapy organisations represented by a national network, translates into potential political power. The strengthened identity of the profession through cooperation and solidarity is the best way to maintain public awareness of the profession and influence future professional regulation and recognition of the modality by health service providers. With this in mind, it is clear that there is a political dimension and mandate at the core of the national networks and of the EFPP.

National Networks is a complex and diverse organizational model but very coherent and consistent with the objectives of the European Federation of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. Its composition is dependent on diverse historical background, geography and social as well as professional circumstances. The EFPP wants to recognize and respect the different speed of development and different configurations in the development of national networks. Herein lies the dynamic and wealth of a continually developing national and international organisation.

November 2021