

## European Association for Constructivism and Integrative Approach

### PREAMBLE

This Charter speaks to the common ethical framework and mission statement that guides ECA member associations and ECA itself toward the highest ethical ideals in their professional and scientific missions. In addition, this document outlines the ECA and its members' relationship with the professions of psychotherapy, counseling and coaching and their place in the overall cultural ethos, with a strong emphasis on values such as respect, diversity, and inclusion, while upholding the highest ethical standards of the profession in both training and practice of psychotherapy, counseling and coaching.

This Charter is distinct from a code of ethics that governs psychotherapy as a profession, and we adhere to the European Association for Psychotherapy Code of Ethics, as the standard that we aspire to uphold. The Charter addresses the behavior and values of associations as well as its individual members.

ECA member associations are associations of people interested in, professionals practicing or studying constructivist, constructionist and similar approaches to psychotherapy, counseling and coaching. They are not necessarily national associations or organizations, and they do not represent in any way the nations in which they may be located, the political agenda of these nations or reflect the ideologies of their political representatives. ECA is primarily concerned with the practice of constructivist therapies and related approaches.

All associations members of the ECA support the aims, values of the ECA as well as this Ethical Charter and agree to follow the guidelines agreed upon among association members based on principles of open dialogue and democratic vote.

## MISSION

ECA and its constitutive members, both organizations and individual members, share the following mission:

- To develop the highest standard of clinical practice through training, supervision and continuing professional development of its members.
- To use evidence-based strategies and techniques when they are available and to strive to improve and expand on accepted practice in order to further the theoretical and practical possibilities of various psychotherapies under ECA's umbrella.
- To respect their clients' autonomy and personal agency
- To accept and respect the diverse worldviews and lived experiences of their clients
  - To support the right of clients to get the best possible therapy for their psychological problems
- To seek supervision, further training and/or peer guidance when necessary.

*ECA supports these efforts and wants to contribute to them.*

Furthermore, all member organizations and individual members of ECA will make an effort to continuously work on the following two goals:

1. To establish and maintain the recognition of constructivist, constructionist and other related psychotherapeutic approaches as well as their status with the European Association for Psychotherapy.
2. To contribute, to the best of their ability, to dialogue between different "flavors" of psychotherapies included in the ECA. The facilitation of dialogue and interchange is meant to improve communication, intellectual exchange and further development, practical and theoretical.



## GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The core values of the ECA are:

1. Honesty and decency
2. Equality and respect of the individual and their autonomy
3. Diversity, respect for dignity and human rights
4. Collaborative decision making through dialogue.

ECA and all its members respect human rights as defined in the *United Nations Universal Human Rights Declaration*. This includes promoting practices in mental health that are respectful of human dignity and rights and denouncing any practice that is contrary to human dignity and rights.

As ECA members we recognize that respecting the specificities of every client's lived experience contributes to an overall more tolerant and caring society. All ECA's members respect the unique worth and inherent dignity of all human beings and diversity among peoples, as well as customs of different cultures and aim to practice in accordance with these principles.

The principle of respect for diversity of opinions and customs is to be limited only when a custom or a belief seriously negates or opposes the principle of respect for the dignity of persons or causes serious harm to their well-being or is in contradiction with the universal declaration of human rights. All ECA MAs always stand against attitudes and behaviors that lead to human suffering and destruction.



## PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

All ECA members strive to maintain professional integrity at the highest level and are responsible to hold all their members responsible should they work against the core values of ECA and the psychotherapeutic, counseling and coaching professions.

All ECA members act cautiously with precise information and without sensationalism when informing the public. Constructivist epistemology will be presented with care and respect it deserves and without ideological or political abuses.

The general attitude within ECA shall be one of co-operation and ECA will aim to achieve the maximum transparency, democratic approach to adopting or changing rules, as well as the principle of solidarity, while trying to resolve any situations which may give rise to conflicts of any kind.

The above written also means that the ECA supports accessibility and that it wants to accept and help new member associations especially from regions where constructivist and constructionist therapies have not yet been well established as valuable and valid treatment modalities. This is especially true for associations located in repressive countries that limit political rights and civil liberties as these associations need most help, given that our epistemological position is one that values pluralism and multiplicity of narratives and perspectives.

Before accepting a new member association, the ECA will ensure that the candidate association supports this ethical charter and that it adheres to satisfactory principles of training and supervision of its members. The ability of each organization to enforce these principles on its own will also be assessed.

## VISIBILITY OF CONSTRUCTIVIST & CONSTRUCTIONIST THEORIES

Promoting constructivist epistemologies supports a more inclusive, learner-centered, and holistic approach to knowledge and understanding, as well as personal growth and psychological change. Constructivist and constructionist values such as diversity and inclusivity empowers individuals, and fosters critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability.

Making constructivist thinking easily accessible and available to the general public shall be an important part of ECA's mission, through creation of public forums for dialogue and debate, through publications and other venues.

Enhancing visibility of different approaches shall include but will not be limited to:

- Personal construct psychology
- Narrative therapy
- Constructivist psychotherapy, counseling and coaching
- Internal family systems theory
- Solution-focused brief therapy
- Expressive therapies
- Coherence therapy

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## INSTITUTIONAL PRESENCE

ECA and its organizational and individual members recognize the importance of institutional organization and shall make an effort to participate and further develop ECA and all its work groups and committees that shall be established.

Institutional presence involves national and international psychotherapy, counseling and coaching associations, as well as encouraging and helping the opening of new training centers in countries where such centers do not exist as of yet.

## ORGANIZATIONAL FLEXIBILITY

As an umbrella organization for a variety of approaches to personal growth and psychological change, ECA is obligated to show structural and organizational flexibility that will be needed to accommodate new members and their specific circumstances, as well as to better work to achieve its mission and stated goals, while upholding, without compromise, its ethical obligations.

Respect for diverse perspectives is a common feature across all constructivist and constructionist approaches and it shall be reflected in the structure and personnel changes within the ECA itself, without compromising its position as the umbrella organization and a guarantee of the status of different psychologies in appropriate national and international regulatory bodies.

This flexibility is to be reflected in subsequent revisions of this charter to reflect the growing status of ECA. In his *Psychology of Personal Constructs* (Volume I), George Kelly states that every person is a form of



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motion, one that changes and retells its own story depending on the action it takes and the context in which it exists. ECA is best seen as yet another form of motion, one that will grow and adapt to its members and the dynamic, changing landscape of psychotherapy, counseling and coaching in Europe.



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