



Applied Research Methods in Psychotherapy Practice



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The importance of practitioner-led research cannot be overemphasized. [...] If we don't take responsibility for evaluating the impact of our work, how can we expect others to take us seriously?

Miller, 2009.

Overview

Today, it is increasingly important that psychotherapists engage with research. This might be in terms of understanding and learning from emerging research in the field, or in terms of practitioners taking their own burning questions as the subject of research. This is important for the quality and integrity of individual practice but also because evidence of effectiveness is increasingly demanded by clients and by those who fund therapy.

To address this, the Danish Association for Psychotherapists has launched a series of research modules with the explicit aim of enhancing the research culture within the DPFO community of Psychotherapy practitioners and beyond. The research modules are also an important step towards gaining wider recognition of psychotherapy in Denmark and ensuring that successful graduates have the knowledge, skills and competences expected at level 7 in the European Qualifications Framework. The research modules are also an important requirement for trainings who are preparing to apply for level assessment from the Danish Accreditation Institute.

Delivery

The research modules are designed to fit in to existing psychotherapy trainings or can be taken as a stand-alone course by individual practitioners. In the former case, the aim is that the modules support and inform the research that students carry out as part of their final year project. Delivery is entirely online and can be in Danish or English. Each module consists of five two-hour taught sessions with one to two hours of preparation between the sessions. The total guided learning time for the modules is 50 hours. Frequency and scheduling of the sessions is decided in discussion with participating trainings.

The modules

Introduction to Research Principles and Perspectives

The aim of this module is to introduce students to theoretical perspectives in philosophy of science and relate these to the notion of practitioner-lead research in psychotherapy. The module presents different perspectives on research and some of the philosophical and epistemological assumptions behind these perspectives. Students also consider some of the challenges associated with doing research, such as issues of evidence, reliability, validity, etc. The aim of this module is to enable students to understand the basic process of research and how theory informs research.

Indicative content:

- The role of theory and the importance of philosophical frameworks in research
- The strengths and weaknesses of different research paradigms, including qualitative and quantitative
- Basic methodological concepts in research, such as validity, reliability, transparency and testability
- Challenges and benefits of doing research in the context of psychotherapeutic practice, including ethical considerations.

Module leader:

Ulrik Houliind Rasmussen, PhD



Ulrik is a Senior Lecturer in philosophy of science, qualitative methods and ethics at University College Copenhagen. He is also an External Lecturer at Copenhagen University (History of Ideas), and a trained psychotherapist. He holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion (Copenhagen University), and an MA in Philosophy and Religion.

He is also engaged in the Teacher Training programme of the Diamond Logos Academy that focuses on meditation and spiritual development.

Action Research and Research Methods in Practice

The aim of this module is to give students a basic understanding of the broad framework of action research within the context of psychotherapy. Students are introduced to the historical tradition of action research and its basic methodological approach. They explore the possibility of doing research as an ongoing evolving process, both in the context of collaborative research with others and as a solo activity. They also explore action research in the context of psychotherapy, including ethical considerations.

Indicative content:

- Overview of the historical development of action research
- Critical examination of different methodological approaches in action research
- Introduction to methods in action research, such as test actions, interviews, focus group interviews, document analysis
- Challenges and opportunities of using action researchers in the context of psychotherapy, including ethical considerations

Module leader:

Pernelle Rose, PhD



Pernelle currently teaches philosophy of science and research design at Aarhus University. She has also supervised many Master's theses. She has extensive practical experience of using ethnographic methods in qualitative research. She is also a practicing psychotherapist specializing in family therapy and

group dynamics. Pernelle is currently part of a research group at DPU/AU, researching children and young people's perspectives on mental health and pedagogy. This research consolidates two of her main interests, which are psychotherapy and giving children and young people a voice.

Phenomenology and First-Person Methods

The aim of this module is to introduce students to the theory and practice of phenomenological and first-person research methods in the context of psychotherapy. Students explore phenomenology as a perspective and where it sits within the scientific tradition. They also explore specific core concepts such as intentionality, the natural attitude and bracketing. Students also learn about phenomenology as an applied practice and they explore examples of phenomenological research in psychotherapy.

Indicative content:

- Overview of phenomenology as a historical movement and as a philosophical stance
- Exploration of core concepts such as intentionality and bracketing
- Introduction to phenomenological research methods drawing on case studies involving psychotherapy
- Challenges and strengths of phenomenology in the context of psychotherapy research, including ethical considerations

Module leader:

Dr Fergus Anderson



With a background as an adult educator in further and higher education, Fergus completed a Doctorate in philosophy from Alanus University (Germany) in 2018. He also has a B.Sc. and a Master's of Education. His main interest and area of expertise is in phenomenology and first-person research methods and his doctoral

research was on the experience of thinking using a first-person approach. He currently works for Crossfields Institute as a programme developer, lecturer and researcher, and he also coordinates the DPFO research modules.

Introduction to Mixed Methods and Quantitative Research

The aim of this module is to introduce students to the field of mixed methods research in psychotherapy. Students learn about the mixed methods perspective in social science research more broadly and some of the key debates and issues in the field that shape research practice, including ethics.

Indicative content:

- Introduction to the quantitative research paradigm and procedures to ensure validity and reliability
- Introduction to the mixed methods approach in research
- Different approaches to integrating qualitative and quantitative research in the context of psychotherapy
- Challenges and benefits of taking a mixed methods approach, including ethical considerations

Module leader:
Dr Jelena Popov



Jelena is currently a post-doc researcher at CCER at the University of Copenhagen. Her background is in psychology, and she is passionate about applying psychological ideas about the mind, learning, development and creativity to address real-world problems. Her main interests are in socio-cultural and practice-based

perspectives on human activity and particularly the impact of AI-based technology. She is also experienced as a qualitative and mixed-methods researcher.

Researching Own Practice

The aim of this module is to give students the knowledge and skills to integrate research into their own practice as psychotherapists and lifelong learners. At the centre of the module is a practice-oriented engagement with what has been learned in the previous modules. Using case studies, mentoring in small groups and their own experience, students explore how to take a research-based approach to their own practice. This is explored primarily through the context of designing and executing their final year project.

Indicative content:

- Case studies of researching own practice
- Peer feedback and discussion in mentoring groups
- Support with designing the rationale and strategy for the final year project
- Understanding the challenges and benefits of researching own practice, including ethical considerations

Module leader:

Dr Charlotte von Bülow



Charlotte has spent the last 20 years working in the private sector as an educator, consultant, CEO and governor. In 2007, she founded Crossfields Institute, a UK educational charity, and developed the organisation to become an Ofqual regulated awarding organisation, a consultancy and a higher education institute.

Charlotte completed her doctorate at the Bristol Business School (Faculty of Business and Law, University of the West of England), where she is now working as a Senior Lecturer in Leadership. She has a particular interest in auto-ethnographic research methods in personal and professional development.

Additional Faculty



Karen Dons Blædel, PhD

Karen has a wide range of experience working as an independent psychotherapist specializing in treatment of stress in the workplace. She has also worked extensively with crisis management and has taught this for the Red Cross. She has worked as a management coach and has been an external examiner for GIS. She also has particular knowledge of and experience with action research. Karen currently works on the board of the Danish Psychotherapist Association.



Finn Janning, PhD

Finn is a writer and philosopher and currently works as an external lecturer at Toulouse Business School, Geneva Business School, and UIBS. He completed his Ph.D. from Copenhagen Business School in 2005, where he has also been an external lecturer at the Institute of Management, Politics, and Philosophy. He has worked with organizational and leadership development at Novo Nordisk Engineering and the Copenhagen Commune. In 2017, he completed an additional Master's in Mindfulness from Zaragoza University.



Professor Emeritus Søren Willert

Søren is a psychologist who has worked for many years at the Institute of Psychology (Aarhus University) and the Institute of Culture and Learning (Aalborg University). He also has extensive professional experience in a broad range of psycho-social helping roles, including psychotherapist, supervisor, coach, process consultant and professional trainer. His practitioner experiences have formed the basis of his teaching and has been the source of the empirical data for his research.

Additional information

The learning platform

The modules are taught online using a Moodle learning platform. The platform is the portal for all readings and other resources that accompany the sessions. All sessions are recorded so students can catch up if they miss a session. Students must have a suitable device (such as a laptop or iPad) in order to participate.

Assessment and Certification

When integrated into existing psychotherapy trainings, the modules are assessed as part of the final project submitted in the last year of training. Members of the Research Modules Faculty can be engaged by trainings to evaluate final year projects on a case-by-case basis, or as required by accrediting bodies. Participants receive a certificate of attendance from DPFO (a minimum of 80% attendance is required).

Pricing

For further information about fees please contact us using the details below

Contact

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Phone: 70 27 70 07



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Good therapists are empathic and curious, and work collaboratively with their clients in order to at least begin to understand the reality of their worlds. Qualitative research can be an invaluable source of insight into the experiences of people who are living with specific problems.

McLeod, 2011.



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