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The Road to Recognition

NLP Psychotherapy and Counselling in Britain

NLP Psychotherapy and Counselling has made great strides in becoming accepted, and even respected, in Great Britain. Five years ago the Association for NLP (ANLP) decided to follow the route of accreditation for its psychotherapists. This article is a report on the progress made to date. It covers the background, the validation process, and the factors underlying the success of the Association in gaining recognition.

The UKCP

In 1981, a Parliamentary private member's bill attempted to introduce legislation to control psychotherapy within Britain. Following the failure of this bill, the British Association for Counselling (BAC) organized a symposium amongst psychotherapy organizations. The aim of this initiative was to establish a dialogue about regulation of the profession. This was the beginning of a series of annual meetings which culminated after seven years in the formation of the UK Standing Conference for Psychotherapy (UKSCP).

Four years later, the UKSCP realized its dream of becoming the national council for the profession of psychotherapy in Britain. It marked the occasion by changing its name to the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) and published the first National Register of Psychotherapists. The Register, which contains around 3000 names of which 52 are NLP Psychotherapists, was presented to the Government at the House of Lords in May 1993. The current Government prefers not to introduce legislation to control professions which adequately regulate themselves. This means the UKCP governs by persuasion rather than statute.

The UKCP currently has around 70 member organizations representing the broad spectrum of approaches to psychotherapy in the UK. It is structured by grouping organizations with similar approaches to psychotherapy; for example Analytical, Behavioural, Family, Humanistic and Hypnotherapy. Finding a pigeonhole for NLP was quite a source of debate within UKCP and we are now in a group called Experiential Constructivists which is made up of the ANLP and Personal Construct Psychology. PCP grew out of the work of George Kelly in the 1950s.

The UKCP also operates at a European level and is the sole UK representative on the Board of the European Association for Psychotherapy. This umbrella organization extends outside the European Community and has members representing almost every European country.