

Foreword to Volume 17, Number 1 of the *International Journal of Integrative Psychotherapy*

Dear Readers,

I am delighted to present Volume 17, No. 1 (2026) of the *International Journal of Integrative Psychotherapy*. This issue offers an eclectic array of articles: cutting edge research on trauma, two in-depth case studies, and a heartfelt description of how life experiences can impact one's choice to become a psychotherapist. Each article demonstrates a unique sense of passion and professional commitment to the field of psychotherapy, with the ultimate goal of bringing best practices to our clients.

We begin with an article by Lindsay Bennett and Dave Emerson: "Increasing Awareness of Physiological Symptoms of C-PTSD: A Qualitative Analysis." It is undeniable that we are living in a time of trauma in our global community. As psychotherapists we are compelled to acknowledge this unfortunate reality, and it is imperative that we be prepared to meet the challenges of trauma-informed care. Trauma comes into our offices in so many shapes and forms: wars and political violence, natural disasters such as earthquakes or climate-related calamities, abuse, intolerance, and discrimination. We are even vulnerable to vicarious trauma not just as witnesses to our clients' stories, but also from social media exposure.

With this as background, Bennett and Emerson bring us an important research study of complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD). C-PTSD includes additional diagnostic criteria beyond post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), particularly with regard to the impact of trauma on the physical self. Integrative psychotherapy has long recognized the necessity of including the physical domain of functioning in our assessment of clients with the goal of full integration of the self, as evidenced in our iconic IP diamond logo. Bennett and Emerson's results affirm the importance of accounting for the physiological domain in IP theories and methods, and it is validating to have research to back up our empirical clinical understandings.

Our next two articles present in-depth case studies. The *IJIP* holds the distinction of being one of the only professional psychotherapy journals to continue to publish case studies, as we believe that case studies are exceptional teaching tools that express the heart and soul of integrative psychotherapy. The following two case studies exemplify this mission, while also affirming the importance of the physiological dimension in IP in our work with clients.

In "Untangling the Skein: From Substance Dependence to Trust in the Relationship," Mercedes Pedreira Quiroga brings us her knowledge and perspective gained from 30 years of clinical work in addiction. Although substances can provide stabilizing and regulating physiological functions to soothe emotional pain, this comes with potentially severe consequences to the body and all aspects of a person's internal and external world. Her article describes how the creation of a secure psychotherapy relationship holds the possibility of achieving the same stabilizing and regulating function as a substance, thus confirming a core value of integrative psychotherapy.

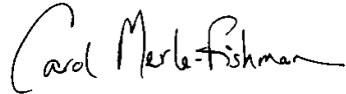
In her article, "Grief, the Body, and Script: An Integrative Psychotherapy Case Study," Elif Akar Gürsoy describes an in-depth therapy process with a client experiencing the physical and psychological dimensions of grief. Once again, we are reminded of the importance of understanding the role of physical responses in psychotherapy, and how the body cannot be separated when engaging in deep psychological healing.

Our issue ends with John Hallett's heartfelt personal exploration, "Life Experiences That Have Shaped Me as an Integrative Psychotherapist." Originally presented as a keynote address in May 2025 at the IIPA 12th Professional Education Conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia, this article reminds us of another core principle of integrative psychotherapy: the importance of an IP therapist's own integration in order to effectively create full contact, deep relational presence, and involvement in the psychotherapy process.

Together, these four articles represent the richness of our field: the importance of quantitative research to substantiate our clinical work, the importance of case studies to remind us that even in the presence of commonly held theories and methods, each person who enters our office is unique, and finally the importance of acknowledging our own journey and humanity as therapists.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the authors who have contributed to this issue, and also my appreciation for our worldwide community of readers.

I hope you enjoy these writings and leave these pages feeling enriched, curious, and inspired.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Merle-Fishman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol Merle-Fishman
Editor-in-Chief
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