

Abstract No. 3.5

Wednesday 6th September 2017 at 11:00-11:45

Title: Conducting psychotherapy with individuals who have acquired deafblindness

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Main focus: Mainly practice, Acquired deafblindness

Abstract: Individuals who have acquired deafblindness may develop mental disorders, e.g. depression and anxiety, in the same manner and for the same reasons as do individuals of the general population.

Challenges associated with deaf-blindness may impact on a variety of daily functions and psychological processes, such as communication and relating to others, mobility, feeling secure, and the individual's regulation of his/her inner world. These are topics that in different ways may appear central in psychotherapy with any patient, not exclusively those who have combined sensory loss.

In what ways may the content and meaning of these topics differ when a therapist meet with a deafblind person? If the therapist isn't familiar with the specific practical and psychological challenges that deaf-blind people meet, there is a risk of resulting either over- or under-shadowing in the psychological assessment process and during the therapeutic process.

Dr. Psychol. Jon Haug has developed a theory related to therapeutic work with individuals who have diabetes. His theory, called "The theory of specificity", pinpoints that different chronic diseases and disabilities may be accompanied by quite specific psychological challenges, experienced by all or most people within the same diagnostic group. The research is based on Dr. Haug's clinical experience during 30 years.

The lecturer will share thoughts of how "The theory of specificity" can be a useful tool when seeking to understand the psychological processes that deaf-blind people do present. Through 15 years' of therapeutic work with deafblind adults, the experience is that some issues arising in therapy seem to be common for all patients, while other issues are clearly related to the individual's specific and subjective life experiences. Each individual's psychological vulnerability and resilience may play a decisive role in how life-challenges are dealt with, and resilience may be found where you don't expect it to exist.