

FEPTO Research Committee Meeting

Braşov, Romania — October 8–11, 2026



Registration

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfJKvODuypabRbtccI7fLgGEarQyq7vdyYzbmFkLFUp9JxnPA/viewform?usp=publish-editor>

Venue

Conference Location: Str. Turnului nr. 25, sc. B, et. 4

We recommend to look for the **Coresi area** (close to the location, 10 min walk), with good coffee shops and restaurants OR **old city centre** (20 - 30 min by car, taxi/Bolt/Uber 5-8 Euro)

Please find below a few accommodation options in Braşov

Thursday, October 8

Time	Session
16:00–16:30	Registration, Opening and Welcoming
16:30–17:00	FEPTO RC greetings and welcome sociometry - Hannes Krall & Inanc Sumbuloglu
17:00–17:30	Introduction to Psychodrama in Romania with Sociometric Plays – Ela Dima
17:30–19:00	Cocktail reception for recent psychodrama publications hosted by AFCEP

Friday, October 9

Time	Room A	Room B
9:00–9:30	Joint warm-up	
9:30–10:30	Keynote — Prof. Cătălin Nedelcea: Chairwork Procedures in Emotion Focused Therapy	
10:30–10:45	Q&A with Prof. Cătălin Nedelcea	
10:45–11:00	Coffee break	
11:00–12:30	Panel 1 — Spontaneity: Measurement and Mechanisms Chair: H. Orkibi • Schnabel — Behavioral Indicators of Spontaneity • Biancalani — Results from the Multilingual Study of the State Spontaneity Scale • Banciu — Experiential Avoidance, Spontaneity, and Creative Adaptability in Youth Mental Health • Orkibi — State Spontaneity and Subjective Well-Being: A 10-Day Pilot Diary Study	Panel 2 — Role Theory, Assessment, and Practice Innovation Chair: B. Azoulay • Berceanu, A. — The Role-Playing Brain • Azoulay, B. — Psychodrama Circles of Belonging Roles Assessment • Şahin Yoluk — Putting Research on Stage: Producing Data through Roles, Session Protocols and Embodied Metaphors • Gavra & Sumedrea — Psychodrama in the Paradigm of Evidence-Based Practice: A Scientometric Perspective on Applied Efficacymin)
12:30–14:00	Lunch	
14:00–15:30	Skill-Building — Stojanovska Learning to Become a Psychodramatist: Exploring the Educational Process in Psychodrama Training	Skill-Building — Sofonea (with Berceanu) A Thread of the T-NET Method
15:30–15:45	Coffee break	
15:45–17:15	Panel 3 — Trauma, Displacement, and Vulnerable Populations Chair: A. Berceanu • Berceanu — T-NET: An Applied Theatre Intervention for Teenagers Experiencing Bullying and Adversity • Şahin Yoluk — Different Languages, Shared Images in Challenging Living Conditions: An Intercultural Psychodrama Workshop	Skill-Building — Čavić-Đurić Tele & Sociometry in Psychodrama Research

Time	Room A	Room B
	• Siminea — Grieving in Exile: A Cross-Cultural Exploration of Funeral Rites, Symbolism, and Mourning Among Expatriates in Switzerland	
17:15–18:00	Closing reflection (joint)	
19:00	SOCIAL DINNER Panoramic Restaurant – preregistration required	

Saturday, October 10

Time	Room A	Room B
9:00–9:30	Joint warm-up	
9:30–11:00	Panel 4 — Psychodrama and Later Life Chair: G. Biancalani • Biancalani — Repositioning the Self in Dramatic Reality: A 6-Key Analysis of a Tele-Drama-Based Intervention With Italian Older Gay Men • Popescu — Growing Connections • Bobic — The Relationship Between Psychodrama and Quality of Life in the Elderly • Shwartz — Playfulness, the Brain, and Mental Well-Being in Older Age	Panel 5 — Psychodrama Across the Parenting and Family Journey Chair: C. Hancheva • Hancheva — Pregnancy in the Psychodrama Group: Acting Out, Acting In, and Beyond • Cesur Atintaş — What Changes Through Psychodrama? Exploring Mothers' Experiences Following a 12-Week Psychodrama Intervention • Olgar Özkan — The Effects of a Psychodrama Intervention on Containing Functions and Sociometric Measures With Mothers of Children Aged 4–6
11:00–11:15	Coffee break	
11:15–12:45	Skill-Building — Bucuță, Dima & Smith (joining online) Building High-Quality Qualitative Research in Psychodrama: The Contribution of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)	
12:45–14:15	Lunch	
14:15–15:45	Skill-Building — Marco Ius & Lucia Moretto Putting Psychodrama Research on Stage: Co-Research Through a Multimodal Approach	
15:45–16:00	Coffee break	
16:00–17:00	Closing reflection and looking ahead - Hannes Krall & Inanc Sumbuloglu	

Sunday, October 11

Time	Session
8.30-12.30	Excursion: Bran Castle (Dracula's Castle) — preregistration required



Black Church



Bran Castle

Arrival & Orientation Guide – Braşov, Romania

Nearest Airports

Participants can reach Braşov via the following airports:

- **Braşov–Ghimbav International Airport (GHV)** – approximately 8 km from Braşov city center
 - **Bucharest Henri Coandă International Airport (OTP)** – approximately 150 km from Braşov city center
 - **Sibiu International Airport (SBZ)** – approximately 150 km from Braşov city center
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Transportation Options to Braşov

From Bucharest Henri Coandă International Airport (OTP):

- **By Train**
Route: Airport – Bucharest – Braşov
Schedule & tickets: <https://mersultrenurilor.infofer.ro/en-GB/Itineraries>
Duration: approximately 3 to 3.5 hours
Cost: approx. 80–90 RON/person (17–19 EUR)
 - **By Car: Airport Transfer Service**
Providers: <https://transferairport.ro/en/> (very good, economy, individual or group reservations)
Duration: approximately 2.5 hours
Cost: approx. (economy) 150 RON/person / **one way** (30 EUR)
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From Braşov–Ghimbav International Airport (GHV):

- **Taxi / Bolt / Uber**
Duration: 20–30 minutes
Cost: approx. 40–50 RON (8–10 EUR)
 - **By Bus**
Route details:
<https://www.rome2rio.com/ro/map/Aeroportul-Brasov-GHV/Gara-Bra%C8%99ov?route=Bus&segment=0>
Duration: 35–40 minutes
Cost: approx. 1–2 EUR
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From Sibiu International Airport (SBZ) – Braşov City Center:

- **By airport transfer services:** <https://transferairport.ro/en/> or other transfer providers
 - Duration: 2.5 hours
 - Cost: aprox. 700–800 RON/car/3 persons (140–160 EUR/car/3 persons)
- **By train:**
Sibiu International Airport (SBZ) – Sibiu Railway Station (6 km):
 - Taxi/Uber/Bolt: 25–35 RON (5–7 EUR)

Sibiu Railway Station – Braşov:

- Only a few trains are available; please check the timetable:
<https://mersultrenurilor.infofer.ro/en-GB/Itineraries>
- Approx. 3–3.5 hours
- Estimated cost: 70 RON/person (14–15 EUR/person)

About Braşov

Braşov is one of Romania's most charming cities, known for its medieval architecture, vibrant cultural life, and scenic location in the Carpathian Mountains.

For more information:

- <https://romaniatourism.com/brasov.html>
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Accommodation options in Braşov

Kronwell Braşov Hotel**** (near the railstation, 10 - 15 minutes walk)

7 Garii Bulevard, Brasov, 500203, Brasov, Romania

<https://kronwell.com/>

Bella Muzica*** (old city centre)

Piaţa Sfatului 19, 500026 Braşov

<https://bellamuzica.ro/en/>

Hotel Boutique Casa Chitic**** (old city centre)

7 Johann Gött, 500025 Braşov

<https://www.casachitic.ro/>

Ataraxya Premium Residence Old Town – serviced apartments (old city centre)

6 Alecu Russo Street, Braşov

<https://www.ataraxya.ro/>

Airbnb – <https://www.airbnb.com>

A wide selection of apartments is available, both in the Coresi area and in the city centre.

Abstracts

Friday, October 9

Keynote — Prof. Cătălin Nedelcea — Chairwork Procedures in Emotion Focused Therapy — University of Bucharest and IPEFE

Dr. Cătălin Nedelcea is a leading clinical psychologist, author, and researcher at the University of Bucharest, widely recognized for pioneering Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT) training in Romania. As the founding president of the Institutul de Psihoterapie Experiențială Focalizată pe Emoții (IPEFE), his work bridges academic rigor with deep clinical practice. In his presentation, he will detail a systematic, research-informed procedure for chairwork role-play within EFT. This framework equips therapists with clear, structured steps to effectively guide experiential role-play ensuring that emotional transformation is both clinically profound and empirically grounded.

Panel 1 — Spontaneity: Measurement and Mechanisms

Konrad Schnabel — Behavioral Indicators of Spontaneity — International Psychoanalytic University (IPU) Berlin, Germany

Building on the conceptualization of spontaneity in the State Spontaneity Scale (Biancalani & Orkibi, 2025), this study explores whether behavioral indicators of spontaneity can be observed in three short psychodramatic improvisations using a table stage. The scenes depicted are: (1) a stranger cutting in line at the supermarket checkout; (2) wanting to buy ice cream at the shop and realizing that one does not have any money; and (3) a self-suggested scene. Independent observers rated the behavioral spontaneity of participants on the four dimensions of the State Spontaneity Scale: dynamic presence, readiness, intuition, and openness. The results show observer agreement and predictive validity of participants' self-rated spontaneity for observer-rated spontaneity dimensions. The discussion focuses on the challenges of identifying suitable behavioral indicators of individual differences in spontaneity.

Gianmarco Biancalani — Preliminary Results from the Multilingual Validation of the State Spontaneity Scale — University of Haifa, Israel

According to Moreno, spontaneity is a state of readiness that propels people to respond to the demand of the situation. This presentation reports preliminary results from the multilingual validation of the new State Spontaneity Scale (SSS) across Arabic, Bulgarian, German, English, Spanish, Hebrew, Italian, Brazilian Portuguese, Romanian, and Russian. Following a standardized procedure including translation, back-translation, and pretesting, 649 adults from 10 language groups participated in a brief online improvisational drama-based session conducted in small groups and completed an anonymous questionnaire immediately afterward. The post-session questionnaire included the SSS, the adapted Spontaneity subscale of the Adult Playfulness Trait Scale, the six-item State Anxiety scale, the Creative Adaptability Scale, and traits of Openness to experience and Extroversion. Analyses examined item refinement, internal consistency, factorial structure, and convergent and discriminant validity. The SSS showed good reliability in the total sample and across language groups. Confirmatory factor analyses confirmed a four-factor solution, including dynamic presence, readiness, intuition, and openness. Second-order and bifactor models also supported the presence of a broader general state spontaneity factor, supporting use of the SSS total score. The SSS total score was positively associated with the other measure of spontaneity, supporting convergent validity, and showed the expected negative association with state anxiety and a positive but moderate association with creative adaptability, supporting discriminant validity. These preliminary findings support the multilingual use of the SSS as a reliable and valid measure of state spontaneity.

Alexandra Banciu — Experiential Avoidance, Spontaneity, and Creative Adaptability in Youth Mental Health: A Psychodrama Perspective — Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi/ Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu/ Association for Training and Research in Psychodrama and Group Psychotherapies (AFCP), Romania

Experiential avoidance, the tendency to suppress, escape from, or control unwanted internal experiences (Hayes et al., 1996), has been consistently linked to internalizing symptoms in youth (Mellick et al., 2019), yet the processes through which it may restrict adaptive responding remain insufficiently understood. A psychodrama-informed perspective offers a relevant framework for examining this association: whereas experiential avoidance may narrow the individual's available response repertoire, spontaneity reflects a state of readiness to respond in a new and contextually appropriate way (Moreno, 1953/1993), and creative adaptability refers to the capacity to generate personally novel and potentially effective cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to stressful or changing situations (Orkibi, 2021). This cross-sectional study examined the relationships among EA, spontaneity, creative adaptability, subjective well-being, and anxiety and depressive symptoms in 444 Romanian adolescents and young adults (ages 16–24). Hypothesized relationships were evaluated using path analysis within a structural equation modeling framework, supplemented by bootstrap mediation analyses. Experiential avoidance was negatively associated with spontaneity, psychological well-being, and creative adaptability, and positively associated with anxiety and depressive symptoms. Spontaneity was positively related to psychological well-being and creative adaptability, whereas psychological well-being was negatively related to both symptom outcomes. The model showed a good fit and explained substantial proportions of variance in anxiety and depression. Spontaneity and subjective well-being partially mediated the associations between experiential avoidance and both outcomes, including a significant serial pathway from greater experiential avoidance to lower spontaneity, reduced well-being, and higher symptom levels. Creative adaptability was associated with spontaneity but not directly with anxiety or depressive symptoms. These findings support a psychodrama-informed understanding of youth mental health, in which EA is associated with restricted spontaneous responding, whereas spontaneity is linked to greater well-being and creative-adaptive responding. Building on these results, the presentation outlines a psychodrama-based intervention framework, aimed at reducing rigid avoidance and mobilizing spontaneity to expand the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral repertoires available to young people.

Hod Orkibi — State Spontaneity and Subjective Well-Being in Daily Life: A 10-Day Pilot Diary Study — University of Haifa, Israel

Background: Spontaneity has long been proposed as a key mechanism of psychological adaptation, yet existing measures primarily conceptualize it as a stable trait rather than a dynamic state. This pilot study evaluated the feasibility of a daily diary protocol and examined associations between state spontaneity and daily psychological functioning. Methods: Twenty adults (aged 22-76 years, $M = 52$; 50% female) completed a 10-day end-of-day diary study. Each evening, participants described a meaningful situation that required responding beyond habitual behavior and completed measures of state spontaneity, affect, perceived stress, and daily satisfaction. Baseline and post-study assessments evaluated changes in psychological functioning, and linear mixed-effects models examined within-person daily associations. Results: The diary protocol demonstrated high feasibility and acceptability. Overall, higher daily state spontaneity was consistently associated with better same-day psychological functioning, including more positive affect, less distress, greater daily satisfaction, and a more favorable emotional balance. Participants also showed improvements on some pre-post indicators of psychological well-being over the study period. Preliminary analyses further suggested that the benefits of spontaneity were particularly pronounced among individuals with greater intolerance of uncertainty, consistent with the notion that spontaneity may function as a compensatory psychological resource under conditions of uncertainty. In addition, state spontaneity showed positive associations with perceived response appropriateness, response speed, and creativity, providing initial support for the construct validity of the State Spontaneity Scale. Conclusions: These pilot findings support the feasibility of intensive longitudinal assessment of state spontaneity and provide preliminary evidence that momentary spontaneity is associated with better daily psychological functioning. The results informed the refinement of the diary protocol for an ongoing

binational intensive longitudinal study investigating state spontaneity as a candidate mechanism of resilience across adulthood.

Panel 2 — Role Theory, Assessment, and Practice Innovation

Alexandru Berceanu — The Role Playing Brain — UNATC IL Cargiale, Romania

Role-play, the process of immersing oneself in the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral perspectives of another, is applied in research, education, therapy, and self-growth to develop skills such as empathy, cognitive flexibility, social functioning and to enhance therapeutic change and learning. Our recent rapid review found more than 80 peer-reviewed quantifying role-play outcomes; however, we found a very limited number of studies on neural processing of role-play. Current neuroimaging studies show the role of the prefrontal cortex, especially of the midline frontal lobe, regions involved in theory of mind but observe also specific role-play activity. Based on our study with 70 subjects, we propose that brain processing of role-play is dependent on the fictional distance between the role-player and the character. We have used a simple role induction method procedure with subjects answering questions from their own perspective (1P), hiding their perspective (DEC), a friend in the third person (3P), friend in first person (O1P), a fictional character, Lucky (FP1), and Shrek (FP2). Comparing our conditions to answering from the self perspective (1P) we observed a lower activity in the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC), with a stronger decrease in activity in this area when the fictionality of the character and the distance from the self are higher. Deception shares the deactivation in the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC) but also presents specifically lower activity within the posterior cingulate cortex (PCC). The dorsomedial prefrontal cortex (dmPFC) seems to emerge as a marker for the fictionality of the role-play. Our results indicate that brain processing of role-playing shares similarities with theory of mind and deception but also has a specificity dependent on the level of fictionality of the role-played character.

Bracha Azoulay — Psychodrama Circles of Belonging Roles Assessment — University of Haifa / ONO Academic College, Israel

Grounded in Moreno's role theory, which posits that the self emerges through enacted roles, and Baumeister and Leary's theory of the need to belong, this presentation introduces the Psychodrama Roles in Circles of Belonging Assessment (RCB), an experiential, action-based assessment protocol embedded within the Cognitive-Behavioral-Narrative (CBN) psychodrama model (Azoulay & Orkibi, 2015). The presentation describes the theoretical foundations, conceptual framework, and methodological design of an ongoing validation study examining the feasibility, acceptability, and perceived usefulness of the RCB among community adults. It will also discuss the clinical and research implications of the RCB as a structured psychodramatic assessment that explicitly links enacted roles to social context and belonging, offering clinicians a systematic method for identifying therapeutically relevant roles and informing psychodramatic case formulation.

İrem Şahin Yoluk — Putting Research on Stage: Producing Data through Roles, Session Protocols and Embodied Metaphors in Psychodrama — Çukurova University, Turkey

This paper aims to discuss how data can be produced, made visible and interpreted in psychodrama research through a psychodrama experience group conducted with disadvantaged women. The study is based on the assumption that psychodrama is not only a therapeutic intervention, but also an experiential, relational and embodied research field. In this respect, the paper focuses on the research value of the psychodrama stage, roles, objects, group games, protagonist work, role feedback and sharing phases. The study was designed as a qualitative case study. The participants were women attending a psychodrama experience group in a municipal vocational and social support center. The group process started with 12 participants, continued for eight sessions before the interruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and was completed with two additional sessions after the pandemic interruption. The data sources included session protocols transcribed from audio recordings, observations of the group director and co-director, psychodramatic scenes, role feedback and participants' sharing during the group process. The data were analyzed through descriptive analysis within the framework of four main themes: resilience, well-being, basic psychological needs and psychodrama. The paper will particularly discuss how psychodramatic

action turns into research data through selected scenes such as the “emotion museum,” the “life is difficult/life is easy line,” the “knot and circle,” the “plant in the soil” and protagonist work. In these scenes, not only participants’ verbal expressions but also their object choices, body postures, role preferences, metaphors, sociometric positions and meaning-making during the sharing phase were considered as data. Thus, the study highlights that psychodrama research may focus not only on “what is said,” but also on “how it is staged,” “what the body makes visible,” and “how the group co-creates meaning.” By demonstrating how session protocols, staged actions and embodied metaphors can be used as systematic qualitative data, this paper aims to contribute to a practitioner-researcher perspective in psychodrama research. Keywords: Psychodrama, psychodrama research, session protocols, embodied metaphor, qualitative research, case study.

Anamaria Gavra & Cristian Sumedrea — Psychodrama in the Paradigm of Evidence-Based Practice: A Scientometric Perspective on Applied Efficacy — Association for Training and Research in Psychodrama and Group Psychotherapies (AFCP) & Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania

Integrating psychodrama into the framework of evidence-based psychotherapy requires reconciling its experiential dimension with the rigors of nomothetic validation. The scientific legitimacy of the method fundamentally depends on the empirical objectification of clinical outcomes. This study proposes a mixed-methods mapping of the research corpus in the field, analyzing how the demands of scientific evidence have reconfigured its conceptual and methodological architecture. Methodologically, this approach combines structural and content analysis, operating on bibliographic metadata extracted from the Scopus database. The CiteSpace platform was utilized for document co-citation analysis (DCA), paired with computational Topic Modeling techniques (specifically the LDA algorithm) to extract latent themes from abstracts. Subsequently, the critical nodes of the network were subjected to a Scoping Review based on the PRISMA protocol, evaluating the quality of clinical designs and the operationalization of action techniques. The mapping results reveal a modularly structured intellectual architecture, reflecting a clear paradigmatic shift: a transition from classical clinical conceptualizations to eclectic applications adapted to contemporary group dynamics, family systems, and, recently, the digital space (via the emerging phenomenon of tele-psychodrama). Diachronic thematic analysis indicates a progressive alignment with current standards, marked by a shift from descriptive case studies to controlled trials and systematic reviews. This paper advocates for the standardization of intervention protocols in psychodrama and proposes a methodological opening toward cognitive neurosciences. Integrating biofeedback and elucidating the neurobiological correlates of action techniques are essential for the empirical validation of this approach within the contemporary mental health landscape. Keywords: psychodrama, scientometrics, Topic Modeling, PRISMA, evidence-based psychotherapy, CiteSpace.

Skill-Building — Mirjana J. Stojanovska — Learning to Become a Psychodramatist: Exploring the Educational Process in Psychodrama Training — Amigdala, North Macedonia

Research on the effectiveness of psychotherapy consistently shows that one of the most significant factors influencing therapeutic outcomes is the therapist himself or herself. This raises an important question: How does a therapist develop the personal and professional capacities necessary for therapeutic work? In psychodrama, where personal development and professional training are deeply interconnected, understanding the learning process becomes particularly relevant. This workshop presents a pilot research project investigating the educational process in psychodrama training. Our interest is focused on how psychodrama trainees learn and which elements of the training experience contribute most significantly to their professional and personal development. We seek to explore the relative importance of various learning sources, including personal psychodrama experiences, group processes, enactments, feedback, trainers, fellow students, theoretical teaching, supervision, and personal reflection. During this 90-minute interactive workshop, participants will be invited to reflect on their own educational journeys and share experiences regarding significant learning moments in their psychodrama training. Preliminary findings from the pilot study and the research questionnaires will be presented, followed by collaborative

discussions on the relevance and adequacy of the research instruments. Participants will be encouraged to provide feedback on the questionnaires, suggest additional dimensions that may influence learning, and contribute ideas for further development of the research. By combining research presentation with experiential reflection, the workshop aims to initiate a broader dialogue about therapist development and the educational processes that shape psychodramatists. Methodology: The workshop will combine experiential and participatory methods, including: •Brief presentation of the research background and pilot findings. • Small-group and plenary discussions on participants' educational experiences. •Reflective exercises exploring significant learning moments during psychodrama training. • Collaborative review of the research questionnaires and measurement tools. •Collection of participants' suggestions regarding additional dimensions, modifications, and future research possibilities. The workshop is intended for psychodrama trainees, trainers, supervisors, and researchers interested in psychotherapy education, professional identity formation, and the factors that contribute to becoming an effective psychotherapist.

Skill-Building — Alexandra Sofonea, with Alexandru Berceanu — A Thread of the T-NET Method — UNATC, Romania

T-NET is a theatre improvisation method aimed at developing social skills and emotion regulation strategies for persons who experienced adverse life events such as harassment, bullying or forms of violence or were involved in them. T-NET relies on NET, Narrative Exposure Therapy, to work and structure personal narratives within a life line, and general improvisation techniques also used in Playback Theatre, Forum Theatre and Psychodrama or current Drama Therapy approaches, as well as on some specific principles: mirroring, narrative agentic centrality and multiple perspectives. It is built as a structured sequence of 12-14 group workshops, complemented when needed by individual NET sessions with a NET therapist. This skill-building session will offer participants an opportunity to experience one representative element of the T-NET methodology: the collective lifeline exercise. Inspired by Narrative Exposure Therapy group work, the exercise invites participants to create a shared timeline of significant moments from their own lives using symbolic objects. The stories that emerge may then be explored either through verbal narration or through standard non-verbal theatre exercises. Throughout the session, the practical experience will be accompanied by discussion on the rationale behind the activities and the considerations involved in facilitating them in educational and therapeutic settings.

Panel 3 — Trauma, Displacement, and Vulnerable Populations

Alexandru Berceanu — T-NET: An Applied Theatre Intervention for Teenagers Experiencing Bullying and Adversity — UNATC IL Cargiale, Bucharest, Romania

Currently in Romania, one in two children has experienced some form of bullying, according to a report by Save The Children Organization. The psychological burden resulting from bullying is known to have a negative impact extending into adulthood. We designed T-NET, an applied theatre intervention aimed at reducing the psychological burden of teenagers who have experienced bullying and other adverse experiences. T-NET is based on Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET), a treatment for individuals suffering from past traumatic experiences, integrated with improvisational theatre techniques. In T-NET, adolescents are gradually introduced to improvisation techniques and psychoeducational exercises designed to help them understand the impact of adverse experiences on psychological well-being. Through narration and improvisation, participants explore life events associated with strong emotional arousal. Specifically, participants narrate their lives as a Hero's Journey, while their peers, guided by a facilitator, respond to the narrated events through improvisation. Fifty-two teenagers completed more than six sessions of T-NET; seventeen of them participated in twelve sessions and completed questionnaires at both the first and final sessions. Comparative pre- and post-intervention analyses of the variables of interest indicated a significant decrease in rumination, anxiety, and depression, alongside an increase in self-esteem. Based on these observed dynamics, we believe that T-NET can contribute to the emotional development of teenagers through its positive impact on key dimensions of psychological well-being typically affected by bullying. Ultimately, T-NET aims to connect life stories and place teenagers at the center of their own experiences, encompassing both happy and adverse events, thereby fostering solidarity and contributing to healthier emotional environments.

İrem Şahin Yoluk & Feyruz Usluoğlu — Different Languages, Shared Images in Challenging Living Conditions: An Intercultural Psychodrama Workshop on Building Trust and Resilience — Çukurova University, Turkey / Toros University, Turkey

This study examines how language barriers were overcome and how symbolic, bodily and relational data emerged during short-term, cross-cultural psychodrama workshops conducted at a women's solidarity centre in Adana with Syrian and Afghan refugee/asylum-seeking women, as well as Turkish citizens of Kurdish and Turkish descent. The workshops consisted of four sessions with two groups (14 and 12 participants), combining sociodrama and psychodrama techniques, and focusing on the psychosocial empowerment of women. The workshops consisted of four sessions, combining sociodrama and psychodrama techniques, with two groups of 14 and 12 participants respectively, focusing on the psychosocial empowerment of women. Data were collected from notes taken by the workshop leaders and two observer-facilitator psychologists on the participants' verbal sharing and drawings. Recurring patterns of meaning and forms of rebuilding trust were evaluated using an interpretive phenomenological approach. This approach addressed the connections between space, relationships, language, and creativity holistically. The interpretative analysis generated three interrelated experiential themes. The first theme, "The Geography of a Safe Place: Nature, Home, and Relational Bonds," was identified around participants' experiences of finding peace in nature and by the sea, mentally returning to their homeland and childhood, experiencing the presence of loved ones as a source of safety, and imagining symbolic and future-oriented safe spaces. The second theme, "Relational, Internal, and Cultural Sources of Resilience," reflected the ways in which participants drew support from family members and close relationships, a sense of self-efficacy, and culturally meaningful forms of expression. These sources appeared to contribute to participants' efforts to preserve hope, continuity, and a sense of personal strength in challenging living conditions. The third theme, "Encounter Beyond Language: Multilingual and Creative Communication," revealed how participants expressed themselves and communicated their experiences through various forms of expression. Using their native languages was associated with a greater sense of being understood and greater freedom in self-expression. Symbolic tools, art, movement, drawing, and music enabled shared experiences and emotions to become visible and communicable beyond the limits of spoken language. This theme also reflected the inclusive and facilitative character of the workshop, which allowed participants to engage through forms of expression that felt more accessible and meaningful to them. The results suggest that group sessions for women who have experienced traumatic life events should address spatial, relational, cultural and linguistic aspects of safety. It was concluded that using multilingual, trauma-sensitive and creative methods supports group cohesion and psychosocial resilience.

Anca Siminea — Grieving in Exile: A Cross-Cultural Exploration of Funeral Rites, Symbolism, and Mourning Among Expatriates in Switzerland — Pafe, Switzerland

Grief is universal, yet its expression, meaning and integration are shaped by cultural, relational and symbolic contexts. Cultural norms influence how loss is understood and expressed, highlighting the importance of culturally sensitive approaches to grief research and assessment (Killikelly, Bauer, & Maercker, 2018). For expatriates, bereavement may additionally occur at a geographical and cultural distance from familiar communities and mourning practices. Funeral attendance, collective rituals and culturally meaningful ways of saying goodbye may be disrupted or inaccessible, potentially affecting processes of meaning-making and adaptation to loss. This doctoral project investigates how expatriates living in Switzerland experience grief, funeral rituals and symbolic mourning while living away from their country of origin. A sequential, mixed-methods design is used. Phase 1 explores the acceptability and feasibility of psychodrama-informed grief work through experiential workshops with therapists, informing refinement of the study procedures and intervention. Phase 2 uses a questionnaire to explore experiences of bereavement, cultural and funeral practices, disrupted rituals, belonging and symbolic forms of mourning within the expatriate population. A subsequent experiential phase will investigate grief through psychodrama-informed group work, incorporating sociometry, symbolic representation, role work and enactment. Particular attention will be given to continuing bonds, cultural identity, unfinished

goodbyes and the ways participants adapt, reconstruct or create mourning rituals across cultural contexts. Building on culturally sensitive approaches to grief (Killikelly et al., 2018), the project aims to contribute to a culturally responsive understanding of bereavement and explore the feasibility of symbolic and experiential approaches to supporting mourning in transnational contexts. Reference: Killikelly, C., Bauer, S., & Maercker, A. (2018). The assessment of grief in refugees and post-conflict survivors: A narrative review of etic and emic research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1957.

**Skill-Building — Tamara Čavić-Đurić & Mirjana Jovanovska Stojanovska,
— Tele & Sociometry in Psychodrama Research — University Singidunum/Belgrade Psychodrama
Center, Serbia**

This session introduces participants to the application of tele and sociometry as research-relevant constructs in psychodrama. Through a concise experiential format, participants explore how relational choices, role dynamics and group processes can be observed, documented and analysed using established instruments such as the Moreno Sociometric Test, sociometric choice matrices, structured observation protocols and thematic analysis. A short psychodramatic vignette will demonstrate how tele-patterns and sociometric structures emerge in action and how these phenomena can be transformed into research-ready material. Participants will practice identifying units of analysis and linking observed interactions to theoretical constructs. The session supports methodological literacy and offers practical steps for integrating tele and sociometry into research design within the FEPTO community.

Saturday, October 10

Panel 4 — Psychodrama and Later Life

Gianmarco Biancalani — Repositioning the Self in Dramatic Reality: A 6-Key Analysis of a Tele-Drama-Based Intervention With Italian Older Gay Men — University of Haifa, Israel

This study examined the dramatic processes that unfolded during a tele-drama-based intervention for older Italian gay men. Integrating psychodrama, drama therapy, and life review, the intervention comprised ten online group sessions involving 13 Italian gay men aged 60 to 75. Data included video-recorded sessions, and guided recall interviews conducted 3 to 6 days after the intervention. The data were analyzed using Pendzik's 6-key model, a drama therapy framework for understanding how dramatic reality is entered, shaped, inhabited, responded to, and implicitly organized. The analysis focused on the six interrelated keys: passages into and out of dramatic reality, styles of enactment, roles and characters, plots and themes, responses after returning to ordinary reality, and underlying subtext or meta-reality. The results revealed three interconnected processes of self-repositioning: negotiating belonging and exclusion in social relationships, reconciling moral judgment with spiritual belonging, and moving from concealment toward visibility. Across these processes, dramatic surplus reality provided a structured and relational space in which painful experiences could be embodied, witnessed, and reworked. The findings illustrate how dramatic engagement supported role expansion, self-acceptance, and relational recognition in later life. More broadly, the study demonstrates the value of Pendzik's 6-key model as a framework for analyzing online drama-based interventions and understanding how dramatic surplus reality supports personal and relational transformation.

Popescu Ioana Mirela — Growing Connections — Association for Training and Research in Psychodrama and Group Psychotherapies (AFCP), Romania

The growing need for high-quality educational and psychosocial interventions for older adults requires professionals to continuously develop their competencies and adopt innovative approaches. In response to this challenge, the Association for Training and Research in Psychodrama and Group Psychotherapies is implementing an Erasmus+ mobility project aimed at strengthening the professional capacities of its

members in the field of adult education and social inclusion. The project combines structured training courses and job-shadowing activities in several European countries, enabling participants to acquire competencies in andragogy, inclusive education, teamwork, and innovative approaches to working with older adults. Beyond individual professional development, the project's main objective is to transform the knowledge, methods, and good practices acquired during the mobilities into a sustainable educational program specifically designed for older adults. A distinctive feature of this initiative is the integration of psychodrama techniques with contemporary adult education methodologies. Drawing on experiential learning, role theory, creativity, spontaneity, and group processes, the future program will promote active participation, emotional well-being, social inclusion, and intergenerational dialogue. Psychodrama methods will be adapted to the specific needs of older adults, creating meaningful learning experiences that foster resilience, communication, and community engagement. This presentation will describe the project's rationale, training pathway, expected learning outcomes, and the process of transferring European good practices into an innovative intervention model. It will also discuss how international mobility can enhance organizational capacity, promote professional collaboration, and contribute to the development of evidence-informed educational programs that combine non-formal education with psychodramatic practice to support healthy and active ageing.

Bobic Viorica — The Relationship Between Psychodrama and Quality of Life in the Elderly — Lucian Blaga University Sibiu / Association for Training and Research in Psychodrama and Group Psychotherapies (AFCP), Romania

Old age is the final stage of human life, and its characteristics are shaped by the physiological process of aging as well as by a combination of physical, familial, and social environmental factors. The efforts of specialists in the social and human sciences to ensure an optimal framework for maintaining the quality of life for the elderly are evident in the therapeutic interventions. From this perspective, developing and implementing an evidence-based intervention program that utilizes psychodrama methods represents both a challenge and a professional responsibility—aimed at bringing about the changes necessary to maintain quality of life, and specifically the well-being of the elderly, so that they may function psychologically and socially within normal limits and avoid becoming a "burden" to others. Keywords: health, psychodrama, social services, elderly person, quality of life, well-being

Noa Shwartz — Playfulness, the Brain, and Mental Well-Being in Older Age, University of Haifa, Israel

As life expectancy increases, there is a growing need to identify accessible, enjoyable, and practical ways to preserve cognitive functioning, mental well-being, and emotional resilience in older age. In recent decades, considerable emphasis has been placed on structured cognitive training. However, this approach often focuses on narrowly defined tasks and does not necessarily engage the full range of older adults' emotional, social, and creative resources. This session proposes a broader perspective, shifting from the concept of "cognitive training" toward a holistic view of playfulness in older age. Playfulness, and particularly interactions based on improvisation, creates a safe space in which novelty, spontaneity, and uncertainty foster curiosity, exploration, and experimentation. Such a space encourages active engagement, thereby promoting creativity and cognitive flexibility. It engages processes of attention, memory, retrieval, and emotion regulation, while at the same time fostering emotional connection and a sense of interpersonal closeness. The session will present recent empirical evidence examining playfulness in older age from several complementary perspectives. Intervention studies demonstrating improvements in both emotional and cognitive outcomes will be presented. These improvements include positive affect, vitality, and social connectedness, alongside gains in working memory and verbal retrieval. In addition, findings from an fMRI study (involving 108 participants in three age groups) will be presented, examining the neural underpinnings of playful experiences and the involvement of networks associated with arousal, reward, and attention during playful engagement. The session will also address the broader question of whether social playfulness may serve as a counterbalance to the growing prevalence of AI-mediated relationships, helping to preserve - and potentially restore - emotional and interpersonal capacities that such relationships may diminish. In addition, we will explore how playfulness can provide a means of investigating future wishes, hope, and imagination among older

adults. By integrating behavioral, emotional, and neural findings, the session will propose a theoretical framework for understanding playfulness as an intervention mechanism for promoting optimal aging, both in everyday life and during periods of change, uncertainty, or social isolation.

Panel 5 — Psychodrama Across the Parenting and Family Journey

Camellia Hancheva — Pregnancy in the Psychodrama Group: Acting Out, Acting In, and Beyond — Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Psychodrama Institute DEA, Bulgaria

Pregnancy represents a profound developmental transition that activates conscious and unconscious processes related to identity, attachment, embodiment, dependency, creativity, loss, and generativity. Within the psychodrama group, pregnancy may emerge not only as an individual experience but also as a group phenomenon, evoking complex relational dynamics and shared unconscious fantasies. This paper explores pregnancy through an integrative psychoanalytic and psychodramatic lens, focusing on the concepts of acting out and acting in as modes of expressing and transforming psychic experience within the group matrix. From a psychoanalytic perspective, acting out has traditionally been understood as the enactment of unconscious conflicts in action rather than reflection, often occurring within the transference relationship. Contemporary relational and group-analytic approaches have expanded this understanding by recognizing the communicative and intersubjective dimensions of enactment. In contrast, psychodrama intentionally utilizes action as a therapeutic medium, transforming impulsive enactments into opportunities for symbolic representation, role exploration, and meaning-making. The concept of acting in provides a useful bridge between these traditions. Acting in refers to the containment and expression of conflict, fantasy, and affect within the therapeutic group space rather than through external action. Pregnancy often mobilizes powerful acting-in phenomena as group members become carriers of projections related to fertility, creativity, vulnerability, rivalry, motherhood, dependency, and continuity across generations. Simultaneously, psychodramatic enactments allow these themes to become visible, embodied, and shared, facilitating movement from unconscious repetition toward reflective integration.

Merve Cesur Atintaş - What Changes Through Psychodrama? Exploring Mothers' Experiences Following a 12-Week Psychodrama Intervention — Muğla Sıtkı Kocman University, Turkey /

This presentation explores the process of change experienced by mothers participating in a 12-week psychodrama group. The group consisted of 12 mothers who attended weekly psychodrama sessions focusing on parenting stress, emotion regulation, and cognitive flexibility within an experiential framework. Rather than emphasizing outcome measures, this study focuses on clinical process observations, group dynamics, and participants' experiential narratives throughout the intervention. Psychodramatic action methods were used to facilitate emotional expression, increase self-awareness, and support new perspectives on parenting experiences. Mothers frequently reported shifts in how they related to parenting stress, alongside increased spontaneity and greater flexibility in responding to challenging interactions with their children. Developments in cognitive flexibility were reflected in participants' ability to explore alternative responses in challenging parenting situations, while emotion regulation processes were observed through increased recognition and expression of affect within the group setting. This presentation integrates process notes and participant reflections to illustrate how change unfolded over time in the psychodrama group. It aims to contribute to understanding the therapeutic mechanisms of psychodrama in parent-focused group work and to highlight its potential for supporting reflective functioning and relational flexibility in mothers.

Düriye Hande Olgar Özkan — The Effects of a Psychodrama Intervention on Containing Functions and Sociometric Measures With Mothers of Children Aged 4–6 — İstanbul Psikodrama Association, Turkey

Objective: The aim of this study is to examine the changes in the containing functions of mothers with children aged 4–6 and the sociometric changes within the group through the mixed methods approach in the context of psychodrama group psychotherapy. Method: The study was conducted on a voluntary basis with mothers who were either receiving psychological counseling for their children from a local

municipality or whose children were attending the municipality's kindergarten. The group was a closed group consisting of twelve participants. Prior to the twelve-session study, the Parental Child Containing Functions Scale (Pre-test) and Semi-Structured Qualitative Questions (Pre-test) were administered to the participants. The Sociometric Evaluation Form was applied during the third and seventh sessions. At the end of the study, the Parental Child Containing Functions Scale (Post-test), Semi-Structured Qualitative Questions (Post-test), Psychodrama Process Evaluation Form and Sociometric Evaluation Form were administered. A mixed model combining qualitative and quantitative analyses was used in the study. Findings: The difference between the pre- and post-test scores of the Parental Child Containing Functions Scale was analyzed using the Wilcoxon test. Although no significant difference was found between the pre and post-test scores of the participants' containing functions in general, significant differences were observed in the subscales. Analysis of the responses to the qualitative measurement tools and the prominent statements during the sessions revealed that participants experienced positive transformations in their containing functions. According to the sociometric measurement results, affinity within the group increased significantly, the number of rejected individuals decreased, the group became more cohesive, and social status increased significantly. It was determined that quantitative, qualitative, and sociometric measurements were interrelated. Conclusion: It was concluded that psychodrama group psychotherapy is an effective method for improving the containing functions of mothers with children aged 4–6 and for fostering sociometric changes within the group. Keywords: Containing Function, Sociometry, Psychodrama.

Skill-Building —Michaela Bucuță, Gabriela Dima & Jonathan Smith (joining online) — Building High-Quality Qualitative Research in Psychodrama: The Contribution of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) — Association for Training and Research in Psychodrama and Group Psychotherapies (AFCP), Romania / Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu / University of Transilvania Braşov / Birkbeck, University of London

Despite the growing body of psychodrama research, studies investigating intervention processes and mechanisms of therapeutic change remain limited. As highlighted in the systematic review by Orkibi and Feniger-Schaal (2019), psychodrama research would benefit from greater methodological diversity, increased transparency, and higher standards of reporting. This skills-building session introduces qualitative research methodologies with a particular focus on Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as an approach well suited to exploring participants' lived experiences and the processes through which change occurs in psychodrama. IPA offers a rigorous yet flexible methodology for investigating how clients, trainees, therapists, or group members make sense of significant therapeutic experiences. The session will present the theoretical foundations of IPA and discuss its relevance for process-oriented psychodrama research. Particular attention will be given to the four markers of high-quality IPA proposed by Nizza and Farr (2021): constructing a compelling, unfolding narrative; developing a rich experiential account; engaging in close analytic reading of participants' accounts; and attending to both convergence and divergence across cases. These quality criteria will be illustrated in relation to research design, suitable research questions, sampling, data collection, data analysis, and reporting drawing on examples from psychodrama research. The session will also compare IPA with other qualitative approaches commonly used in psychotherapy research, including thematic analysis, grounded theory, and narrative inquiry, highlighting the distinctive contribution of each methodology. The session will also address issues of methodological transparency, reflexivity, researcher positioning, and quality criteria in qualitative psychotherapy research. The final part of the session will be interactive. Participants will gain a clear understanding of the contribution of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to psychodrama research, learn when and how to apply this methodology, develop research questions appropriate for IPA, become familiar with its main analytical stages, and acquire practical guidance for designing qualitative studies and developing future collaborative research projects.

Skill-Building — Marco Ius & Lucia Moretto — Putting Psychodrama Research on Stage: Co-Research Through a Multimodal Approach — University of Trieste, Italy / “Studio di Psicodramma” Milan / AFCP

Most psychodrama research studies psychodrama as an intervention, particularly in clinical settings. This skill-building session reverses the lens: can psychodramatic, and especially sociodramatic, methods themselves become research methods for exploring social, educational and community issues? Grounded in participatory research and in the principle of conducting research with rather than on people, the session will turn “psychodrama research” into the object of a collective inquiry, bringing research literally onto the stage. After a brief conceptual and methodological introduction, participants will respond to the question “What is psychodrama research for me/us?” through Oneiric Drawing, a graphic-expressive method that gives form to spontaneous images, symbols and embodied knowledge. Drawings will then become starting points for intermodal transformation through sociodramatic enactment. Participants will act not as research subjects but as co-researchers, generating collective representations, questions, tensions and hypotheses about research in the psychodrama field. The objectives are to experience an intermodal pathway from image to action and reflection; explore psycho/sociodrama as a participatory research method rather than a clinical intervention; examine the role, position and ethical responsibility of the researcher-facilitator; and identify possible applications to social work, education and community research. The final sharing will be expanded into a reflective analysis of the process: What knowledge was produced, how was it produced, whose voices emerged or remained absent, and how might the method be adapted to participants’ own research contexts? The session thus develops methodological knowledge through the very method it seeks to investigate.