

Dear Readers,

I am delighted to bring you Volume 16, No.1 (2025) of the International Journal of Integrative Psychotherapy. This issue brings an array of riches, perspectives, and opportunities to explore integrative psychotherapy “in action” through six distinct yet interrelated articles.

We begin with Sally Openshaw’s thought provoking keynote address “Stepping into Someone Else’s Shoes.” Sally presents an interesting overview of AI and ChatGPT, and she describes how integrative psychotherapy is viewed through that lens. With a bit of humor, we see how convenient AI and ChatGPT can be, but we are soon alerted to some of the inherent risks of this technology. Sally challenges us, as relational integrative psychotherapists, to think about how we use AI and how we can help ensure that our well-founded, and very human, philosophy, theory, and methodology can be adequately represented in this “non-human” reality.

As a counter to the world of AI, we follow with five articles that explore the distinctly human and relational side of integrative psychotherapy. In their article “Psychotherapy of Relational Withdrawal: Perspectives from a Client and Therapist,” Christine Loyrion and Richard Erskine employ a unique form of observational psychotherapy “research” that includes both the therapist’s and client’s experience as told through a verbatim transcript of one session. The exquisite nuance of this work, which tracks the authentic interchange between the two, brings us deep into the meaning of relational healing through both verbal and non-verbal means.

In my keynote address “Finding Home: My Journey as an Integrative Psychotherapist,” I explore how our individual experiences of “home” inform our lives and our philosophical and theoretical approach as therapists. I also suggest that it is essential for us to understand the meaning of “home” for each of our clients, in order to facilitate full internal integration and healing.


A core principle of our work as integrative psychotherapists is our commitment to be life-long learners, always striving to examine, challenge, and refine our theoretical and methodological base. In that spirit, Richard Erskine brings us “Stimulus, Structure, and Relationship: An Integrative Psychotherapy Theory of Motivation.” In this important and clarifying work, Richard bolsters our understanding of the theory of motivation, one of the three pillars (alongside the other two pillars of a theory of personality and a theory of therapeutic methods) of a coherent and consistent theoretical school of psychotherapy. He offers us a richer theory of motivation based on our biological imperative for stimulus, structure, and relationship. With unified theory, we can create unified methodology, all in the service of healing and integration for our clients. Without a doubt, the examination of theory is a truly human undertaking.

Jose Manuel Martínez Rodríguez (“Pepe”) continues to expand our understanding of the connection between intersubjectivity, core principles of integrative psychotherapy, and the therapeutic relationship in his article “Intersubjectivity and the Shared Third Perspective in the Therapeutic Relationship.” Drawing on theory, fairy tales, and case material, we are brought into a world in which we move beyond “I and thou” and into the realm of “we”—a “shared third perspective.” Pepe focuses on various developmental arrests in this article, but it is also profound to ponder how his encouragement that we work towards and achieve a “shared third perspective” might impact our relationships and the healing needed in the world today. Indeed, this will require human effort far beyond the world of AI.

Our issue closes with a case study by Richard Erskine: “Wayne: The Emptiness of the Unloved Child.” In this sensitive and heartfelt article, we are brought back to the essence of developmentally-focused, relationally-based integrative psychotherapy—and the essential human elements of healing that our work can offer.

I wish you an enriching and thought inspiring journey through this issue. May you embrace the deep humanity of the work we do and find contentment and gratification in all your human endeavors.

With best regards,

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

Carol Merle-Fishman
Acting Editor-in-Chief
20 March 2025