

## **Intercultural therapy: the place of language in the psychoanalytic framework.**

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The aim of this presentation is to highlight the role of language in an intercultural psychoanalytic framework, focusing on the work with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

At the core of this approach there is the principle that in order to work with a wider typology of patients, adjustments on the established theory and setting are necessary. Psychoanalytic therapy is called to take into account the culturally bounded differences on patients coming from a variety of backgrounds. There is a need to differentiate the cultural from the intrapsychic component in order to establish a therapeutic relationship which is real, meaningful, and generates changes.

What is the place of language in one's identity? What are the effects on the individual and on the therapeutic relationship of having to use a language different from the mother tongue in order to communicate? What is the role of language in conveying an experience such immigration and, in the case of refugees, the multiple losses that a forced immigration implies? What is the relation between language and power and how it is displayed in a therapeutic setting in which analyst and patient do not share the same mother tongue but one of the dyad will use the language of the host country? What are the meanings of an "interpretation" made in a context of interpretation/ translation of languages? These are few of the questions which will be addressed, drawing from my training and the work of the Refugee Therapy Centre, a London based charity.