

EFTA Research Cafe 24 July 2025

Why research matters for systemic psychotherapy practice

Short summary:

The presentation will illustrate the importance and purpose of doing research and using a range of research methods to inform and enhance systemic psychotherapy practice.

Abstract:

Systemic trainees and psychotherapists often wrestle with ambivalence toward research, recognizing its potential value but questioning its relevance to therapy practice. This presentation draws on the speaker's research and clinical experience to demystify research and highlight how practice-based studies enhance systemic practice and mental health services. By exploring selected projects, the presentation illustrates the importance of diverse research methods in informing systemic practice and training. Examples include a qualitative study on young people's experiences in family therapy and a systematic review on systemic therapy's efficacy for depression. The findings from the research underscore the necessity of moving beyond 'one size fit all' individual clinical approaches towards more tailored interventions, providing increased choices for clients with better therapy options that align with their needs.

Bio:



Prof. Dr. Andreas Vossler is a psychologist, systemic family therapist, academic, researcher and trainer. He is a Professor of Psychology and Psychotherapy at the Open University where he is Deputy Director of Teaching (Counselling). As Chartered Psychologist and bilingual systemic couple and family psychotherapist, he has extensive clinical experience in working with children, young people, and families in Germany and the UK over many years. He has a deep belief in the value of research for counselling and psychotherapy practice. He has been conducting research on family and couple counselling and intimate relationships for 20+ years and has experience in systematic reviews, qualitative research and developing training for practitioners (in-person and online). He is member of the Local Council of the UK Chapter of the Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR) and Research Committee of the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice (AFT). He is lead editor of *Mad or Bad? A critical approach to Counselling and Forensic Psychology* (2017) and *The Counselling and Psychotherapy Research Handbook* (2014). His current research interests include: systemic family therapy, therapist's and clients' experiences of online counselling, intimate relationships and sex and intimacy while aging.