

Switzerland

The Situation of Psychotherapy in Switzerland

Legislation

On April 1, 2013, the Federal Law about Psychology Professions (Psychologieberufegesetz, PsyG) has been introduced in Switzerland. According to this new law, all students who want to follow postgradual training in psychotherapy have to pass a master degree in psychology at a Swiss high school or university. As a consequence of this law, all institutions licensed to offer postgradual training have to undergo new accreditation of their curricula which have to fulfil the quality standards set down in the PsyG. This accreditation process should be finalised in 2018.

Situation of psychotherapists

Psychotherapists – whether independent or employed – are only allowed to treatment by delegation, mandated by a medical doctor.

Only psychotherapists who have completed the above training are licensed to use the title Federally Approved Psychotherapist. And only this title allows them to open a practice, permission issued by the cantonal departments of health.

Training

Basically, the training of psychotherapists follows three phases: basic training (master in psychology), postgradual training (psychotherapy) and further training.

Postgradual training takes roughly four years and has to be completed within six years, consisting of:

400 units of theory of the chosen method

100 units of transdisciplinary (generic) theory

150 units of self-awareness training

150 units of supervision (single- and group setting)

2 years at 100 % of hands-on training at an organisation offering psychosocial provision.

Further training has to be followed continuously and should add up to 500 hours over four years.

Candidates with a degree in medicine wanting to follow postgradual training in psychotherapy are under supervision of the Swiss Association for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (SGPP).

Postgradual training institutes on psychotherapy

Institutes offering postgradual training in psychotherapy are licensed by the Federal Office for Public Health. All training institutes – there are approx. 40 recognised institutes in Switzerland – are privately financed; they receive no subsidies from the public hand. No institute has so far been integrated in an institution of higher education. For the time being, they have been accredited on a provisional basis and are awaiting final accreditation until 2018.

Health insurance

Psychotherapy is not included in general public insurance. Voluntary supplement insurance can partly include psychotherapy treatment. The question whether psychotherapy should be included in basic health insurance is subject to long ongoing debates.

Psychotherapy modalities are accepted as long as they are executed by a psychotherapist listed on the general register of health insurances. To be included on that list, psychotherapists have to fulfil strict criteria.

Facts and figures

- There are approx. 5'700 (1450 independent, 1000, delegated, 1270 independent and delegated) psychotherapists practicing in Switzerland, whereof approx. 25% trainees (ref. BASS survey 2012).
- The average activity level of psychotherapists: 54%
- There are approx. 40 licensed training institutes on psychotherapy in Switzerland.
- Cost of psychotherapy treatment: CHF 140 to 170 per hour are recommended.