

## **Erkki Heinonen:**

### **Processes of emotional change – a psychotherapy research perspective**



I work as a Professor of Psychology at the University of Oslo and research manager at the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. My main interests are in the process, mechanisms, and outcomes of psychotherapy. In other words: what are the patient-, therapist-, and relationship-related determinants of effective psychotherapy? Therapeutic approaches that I have investigated include psychodynamic, solution-focused, emotion-focused, and cognitive-behavioral orientations. Many of my publications stem from the Helsinki Psychotherapy Study, a large-scale randomized trial of short- and long-term therapies ([www.thl.fi/hps](http://www.thl.fi/hps)).

My dissertation, and one of my long-standing research foci, are also psychotherapists. What are the characteristics of effective clinicians – and how do they develop, in the course of training, supervision, and professional work? Clinically, I have worked for many years in specialized healthcare, with different mental disorders, and taught and supervised healthcare professionals. I have trained specifically in emotion-focused therapy (EFT) at York University, Toronto, under Les Greenberg and colleagues, and maintain a private therapy practice Helsinki

#### **Summary of presentation**

Emotional problems figure prominently in most clinical conditions treated by psychotherapy. Accordingly, psychotherapies typically aim for emotional changes in clients. Yet different therapies work with emotions in distinctly different ways. The presentation will review research evidence on the various pathways of emotional change, applied by different therapy models, and drawing on examples from both inside and outside of therapy. Future research and clinical perspectives on how to optimize emotional change processes will be discussed.