

Research at the Istituto di Gestalt HCC Italy
- Previous research paths -

The Institute has been engaged in clinical research and publication in collaboration with universities and other institutions around the world.

- From 2001 onwards, the Institute has been pursuing a line of research initiated by professor Daniel Stern of Geneva University on the connections between intersubjectivity and Gestalt therapy. The results of this research were published in the following works: Stern D., Bruschiweiler-Stern N., Harrison A., Lyons-Ruth K., Morgan A., Nahum J., Sander L., Tronick E. (2000). Lo sviluppo come metafora della relazione [Development as a metaphor of relationship]. *Quaderni di Gestalt*, XVI, 30/31: 6-21; Stern D. N. (2006). L'implicito e l'esplicito in psicoterapia [Implicit and explicit relational knowledge in psychotherapy], in: Spagnuolo Lobb M. (Eds.), *L'implicito e l'esplicito in psicoterapia. Atti del Secondo Congresso della Psicoterapia Italiana*, with DVD, Milan: FrancoAngeli, pp. 28-35; Stern D.N. and the Boston Change Process Study Group (2003). On the Other Side of the Moon: The Importance of Implicit Knowledge for Gestalt Therapy, in: Spagnuolo Lobb M., Amendt-Lyon N. (Eds.), *Creative license: The Art of Gestalt Therapy*, Vienna and New York: Springer, pp. 21-35. This line of research has further brought to the description of the concept of “Aesthetic Relational Knowledge” (Spagnuolo Lobb, 2018); this conceptual construct is now under validation with a research in cooperation with the Department of Psychology of the University of Catania. Moreover, it has brought to the concept of “dance of reciprocity”, applied to caregivers/child and therapist/patient interactions.
- In 2008, the Institute expanded its research interests to include the study of primary relationships, under the supervision of Professor Elizabeth Fivaz-Depeursinge of the Lausanne School of Medicine, who founded the “Lausanne Trialogue Play” research method. The aim of this research is to compare the classical LTP dimensions with some relational dimensions that are intrinsic to the epistemology of Gestalt psychotherapy. The Institute has organized training sessions on the Lausanne method, which were also attended by members of faculty of local universities. Later, the Institute established a permanent research group on the observation of conflict management at the contact boundary between family members. The outcomes of this research have been presented at national and international congresses.
- Starting in 2005, the Institute has been engaged in the study of contemporary pathologies. This line of research has led to numerous publications, including Francesetti G. et al. (Eds.) (2007), Panic attacks and postmodernity. Gestalt therapy between clinical and social perspectives, Milan: Franco Angeli; Francesetti G. et al. (Eds.) (2012), Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice. From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of Contact, Siracusa: Istituto di Gestalt HCC Italy Publ. Co. (www.gestaltitaly.com); Francesetti G. (Ed.) (2015),

Absence is the Bridge between us. Gestalt Therapy Perspective on Depressive Experiences, Siracusa: Istituto di Gestalt HCC Italy Publ. Co. (www.gestaltitaly.com).

- In 2009, we started a fruitful scientific exchange with Professor Vittorio Gallese of Parma University, with the aim of confirming one of the basic hypotheses of Gestalt therapy. According to the Gestalt approach, therapy is successful when it provides support to the patient's intentionality. Thus, we aim to confirm the idea that the core therapeutic element is represented by the energy and vitality that the patient "offers" to the therapist. This line of research has brought to various publications: Spagnuolo Lobb M. et al. (2020). Bodily and emotional activation in the face of pain: bridging neurosciences and Gestalt therapy to understand the therapist's wish for help, *in press*; Spagnuolo Lobb M., Gallese V. (2011). Dall'enterocezione al sostegno dell'intenzionalità di contatto. Simulata di una seduta dal vivo. *Quaderni di Gestalt*, XXIV, 2: 91-99, DOI: 10.3280/GEST2011-00201.
- Starting in 2010, the Institute has been working on the definition of Gestalt relational dimensions, in order to come up with a diagnostic tool that can help detect risk and resilience factors in interactions. Such tool should be applicable to a variety of clinical and supervision settings. The construction of two questionnaires, one for therapist and one for patient, to be filled at the end of each session is in progress, to measure the reciprocity of their therapeutic interaction. This study is conducted together with Cefex, Santiago de Chile.

The Institute has also collaborated with the following institutions:

- Interdisciplinary Department for European Studies (DISEUR), Catania University, directed by Prof. Savoca: collaboration with the department's PhD programme;
- Clinical Neuroscience Department (directed by Prof. La Barbera), Graduate School of Psychiatry, Palermo University: didactic and scientific exchange for students enrolled in the University's residency training programme in Psychiatry;
- Interdepartmental Centre for Educational Research (directed by Prof. Di Vita), Palermo University: organization of study seminars;
- Catholic University of Milan: organization of study conferences.
- Educational Processes Department of Catania University (directed by Professor Santo Di Nuovo).