



EAST EUROPEAN
ASSOCIATION
FOR EXISTENTIAL THERAPY

XIII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Kurhauzas, B. Sruogos g. 2, Birštonas
September 11 - 16, 2026

Existential Dimension
in Counselling and Psychotherapy

25th
anniversary

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

Working Existentially
with Experiences
of Interpersonal Trauma
and Dissociation

September 11-13, 2026
Facilitator: Marc Boaz

Pre-Conference Programme

September 11-12

10:00-11:30 – workshop
11:30-12:00 – break
12:00-13:30 – workshop
13:30-15:00 – lunch break
15:00-16:30 – workshop
16:30-17:00 – break
17:00-18:30 – workshop

September 13

10:00-11:30 – workshop
11:30-12:00 – break
12:00-13:30 – workshop

The pre-conference workshop will explore contemporary existential approaches to interpersonal trauma. We will also draw on the phenomenology of movement to introduce participants to ways working with trauma in existential psychotherapy and counselling.

Through a series of lectures, seminars and experiential exercises, we will delve into:

- philosophical theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of existential approaches to trauma.
- working with lived questions and metaphors arising from experiences of trauma.
- encountering human daimonics, people's existential horror and terror, and how to work with fantasies, expressions and enactments of rage, destruction and annihilation.
- dissociative experiences (or Being-between-worlds), and how to work with spectrality and liminality in the psychotherapeutic relationship.

Conference Programme

September 14

9:30-11:00 – Opening of the Conference
11:00-11:30 – Break
11:30-13:00 – **Marc Boaz:** Existential De-anchoring – what traumatic encounters reveal about the nature of our existence (*English*)
13:00-15:00 – Lunch break
15:00-15:30 – **Matthew Henson:** Existential Relationship Therapy (*English*)
15:30-16:00 – **Dida Mitchell:** Some Serious Reflections on Humour in Life and Therapy (*English*)
16:00-16:30 – Break

16:30 – 18:30 Workshops:

- ♦ **Dida Mitchell:** Some Serious Reflections on Humour in Life and Therapy (*English*)
- ♦ **Matthew Henson:** Existential Relationship Therapy (*English*)
- ♦ **Tomas Sodeika:** An Attempt at a Philosophical View of Fear (*Russian*)

Conference Programme

September 15

9:30–10:30 – Ran Lahav: Philosophical Insights and What They Do to Us (*English*)

10:30–11:30 – Natalia Artemenko: Phenomenology of the “Post-Risk Society”:

Temporal Configurations of Experience (*Russian*)

11:30–12:00 – Break

Room 1

Room 2

12:00–12:30	Robertas Petronis: Is There Philosophical Meaning in the Experience of Anger? (<i>Russian</i>)	Sergey Neborsky: Story with philosophy (<i>Russian</i>)
12:30–13:00	Timas Petraitis, Juris Zuitins: The Experience of Reading Heidegger (<i>Russian</i>)	Natalia Tkacheva: Meaning and Meaninglessness in Later Life: An Existential-Analytical Perspective (<i>English</i>)
13:00–13:30	Ivars Bauls: Can Psychotherapy Become a Heideggerian Event and Rescue a Person from Dispersion in Everyday Concern? (<i>Russian</i>)	Marina Mazynskaya: Existential Dimensions of Family Life: Values, Responsibility and Meaning Choices of Men and Women (<i>Russian</i>)

13:30–15:30 – Lunch break

15:30–18:30 Workshops:

♦ **Ran Lahav:** Counselling and the Power of Philosophical Insights (*English*)

♦ **Natalia Artemenko and Tatjana Dragan:** Between Philosophy and Psychology — Supervision at the Intersection of Disciplines (*Russian*)

♦ **Yulia Abakumova-Kociuniene, Tomas Sodeika:** Cinema Therapy for Couples (*Russian*)

19:30 – Evening for Participants and Guests – Dialogical Encounters

September 16

9:30–10:30 – Association Members Meeting

10:30–11:00 – Paulius Skruibis: What Is a Good Existential Supervision? (*English*)

11:00–11:30 – Break

11:30–13:00 – Zoltán Kováry: Creativity and Fate — the Fate Analysis of Leopold Szondi: a Lost Central European School of Existential Psychology (*English*)

13:00–14:30 – Lunch break

Room 1

Room 2

14:30–15:00	Tatjana Dragan: Therapeutic Relationship: When the Psychotherapist Changes (<i>Russian</i>)	Olga Hlebnikova: The Multiculturality of a Person as Fertile Ground for Internal Conflicts (<i>Russian</i>)
15:00–15:30	Zehra Ali: The Development of Therapeutic Relationships in Time-Limited Existential Therapy: A Constructivist Grounded Theory Study (<i>English</i>)	Svetlana Dremach: The Experience of Oneself and One’s World in Emigration: Existential Self-Determination in Mature Age (<i>Russian</i>)
15:30–16:00	Mabel Verstraaten-Bortier: The Therapist’s Experience of the Lived Body, Time and Space When Working with Suicidal Clients (<i>English</i>)	Vita Vaitkiene: Being Together in Search of Self and Meaning in the Work with Adolescents: Existential and Narrative Perspectives (<i>Russian</i>)

Important! All presentations will be interpreted from English to Russian and vice versa.





Marc Boaz

is an existential psychotherapist, a visiting Professor of Mental Health and Psychotherapy at the University of Northampton (UK), a visiting Senior Research Fellow (Hon) at the University of Sussex (UK), and teaches Critical Psychopathology at the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling (NSPC), UK. He is an author of works on interpersonal trauma, childhood adversity and neurodivergence.



Matthew Henson

is an existential psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer, with 20 plus years experience of working in private, public and voluntary sectors. He is Chair-Elect of the Society for Existential Analysis.



Dida Mitchell

has worked as a therapist and supervisor since 1994 and as a mediator since 2006. She was a visiting lecturer and supervisor at Regent's University from 1995 – 2013. Dida is currently a visiting lecturer at the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling, London and Roehampton University, Surrey. She has facilitated yearly workshops in Birštonas since 2021 on Existential Supervision.



Tomas Sodeika –

Prof. Dr. habil. teaches courses in phenomenology, existential philosophy, philosophical hermeneutics, and the philosophy of dialogue to students of Institute of Humanistic and Existential Psychotherapy. He is the developer and conductor of Institute's "Philosophical Practice" program.





Ran Lahav

is a philosophical counselor and director of the Deep Philosophy School for philosophical counseling and practice. He received his PhD in philosophy and Master's in psychology from the University of Michigan, then taught at several universities, and now teaches at Vermont State University. He has been active for three decades in the international movement of philosophical practice, has published many articles and books about the field, and has given numerous workshops around the world.



Natalia Artemenko

is a philosopher (PhD) and Visiting Professor at TU Dortmund (Germany). She has been a Visiting Professor at the Institute of Humanistic and Existential Psychotherapy since 2018 and served as Editor-in-Chief of the international journal HORIZON. Studies in Phenomenology.



Robertas Petronis —

existential therapist, Director of the Centre for Existential Therapy. Lecturer and supervisor at the Institute of Humanistic and Existential Psychotherapy.



Sergey Neborsky —

psychologist, psychotherapist. Professional interests: history of ideas, existential philosophy, the application of existential thought in psychotherapy, pedagogy, and sports psychology.





Timas Petraitis
is an Existential therapist,
supervisor, food courier.



Juris Zuitins (Latvia) —
psychologist, psychotherapist,
existential therapist and supervisor
at the Institute of Humanistic and
Existential Psychotherapy. I have
a particular interest in existential
philosophy and its practical
application. I am currently enrolled
in the Institute's programme
"Philosophical Practice"



Natalia Tkacheva
is a psychotherapist specializing
in psychological difficulties and
disorders, complex emotional
suffering, and experiences of loss.
She has completed a program in
Existential Analysis at the University
of Salzburg under Dr. Alfried Längle.



Ivars Bauls
is an existential psychotherapist in
private practice in Latvia (Mārupe),
where he conducts individual
and group psychotherapy. He is a
lecturer at the University of Latvia.





Marina Mazynskaya — psychologist, Master of Psychology, works with individual clients and couples. Her professional interest is connected with the themes of family relationships, values, and meaningful life choices. Warsaw, Poland.



Tatjana Dragan — existential psychotherapist, clinical psychologist, lecturer at the Institute of Humanistic and Existential Psychotherapy, currently enrolled in a supervisor training program. She is particularly interested in phenomenological psychology and the changes experienced by the therapist within the therapeutic relationship.



Yulia Abakumova-Kociuniene is a psychologist, psychotherapist, and supervisor. She practices individual and group psychotherapy, teaches at the Institute of Humanistic and Existential Psychotherapy (HEPI) and supervises colleagues.



Paulius Skruibis — Professor at the Institute of Psychology, Vilnius University, lecturer at HEPI, and existential therapist in private practice. President of the Eastern European Association for Existential Therapy.





Zoltán Kováry – PhD, clinical psychologist, assistant professor at Eötvös Loránd University Institute of Psychology, Budapest. He is a logotherapy and existential analytic consultant and daseinsanalytic consultant, litterateur, linguist, and philosophy PhD student as well. An author of approximately 100 publications and several books, his main work is “Introduction to Existential Psychology vol. 1-2” published by Routledge/ Taylor & Francis, December 2024.



Olga Hlebnikova (Estonia) – psychologist working in the existential-humanistic approach. Private practice: individual online work with adults. Author and facilitator of the course “Psychological counselling for emigrants in the existential-humanistic approach.”



Dr Zehra Ali is a registered Psychotherapist with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (MBACP) and has completed her doctoral training in Counselling Psychology in the UK. Her research explores the development of the therapeutic relationship in time-limited existential therapy.



Svetlana Dremach – master of Counselling Psychology, existential therapist, and therapeutic group facilitator. Board member of the Latvian Association of Existential Therapy. Practices individual and group therapy with adults.



Mabel Verstraaten-Bortier is an existential therapist and visiting lecturer at a postgraduate institution in Cameroon. She is also an independent researcher. Her research interest includes therapy with suicidal clients, women’s issues, and solution-focused community research.



Vita Vaitkiene – medical psychologist, psychotherapist (existential therapy). I work in a primary mental health center, where I consult clients from children to seniors, more often children and adolescents. When consulting, I feel that I rely on two approaches – clinical thinking and the principles of existential therapy.