

Top tips for starting a National Association

John Wheeler, as Task Group Lead, presented the following question to members of the international Cooperation Contact Group.

A number of you represent National Associations, some of which have been running for a while, some for much longer. What are your top three tips for getting a National Association started? What worked for you when you began?

When a group of us met at the recent World Conference some were hoping to create National Associations in the countries they came from, and hoped to learn from others who already had National Associations in place.

Steve Flatt from the UK shared the following,

There are a number of key issues that starting a new association require thinking about:

- 1) What kind of association? Charity, company limited by guarantee, community interest company. Depends on the local laws are that this will define the nature of the organisation for the future
- 2) depending upon the above, trustees or directors or both
- 3) Defining a set of articles of Association. These can be bought online and modified as required but it is important to think about exactly what the association is planning to do.
- 4) Is it to be a commercial organisation, and members benefit organisation or public benefit organisation? Again the answers to these questions depend on the country of origin. But it is important to be aware of the laws governing the setting up of the various different associations.

Other than that, all you need to do is have a little bit of money to create stationary, and a list of people that you would like to be involved. SF will provide the necessary questions beyond that!

If you want more help, if I can be of more direct assistance please let me know.

steve@psychological-therapies-unit.co.uk

István Czombos from Hungary shared the following

From Hungary the tips, those seem to work:

We had a more or less technical reason to form an Association: the brief coaches needed a formal body to join the national lobby organisation of coaches, so we had the mutual interest to have a frame for having something in common.

As we had the frame, we looked for ways to make it useful. Since that time we have a monthly meeting where we sit together to have useful conversations: sharing own activities, learning, cases where we stuck, new things we wanted to try.

As we started to grow (slowly) we look for new places where we can bring the SF tools, and mind-set. For that we run mutual projects with other organisations and gain new knowledge on SF for ourselves, as well. These projects (like WOWW projects with teachers, impact evaluation projects with NGOs, social reintegration projects with juvenile justice institutions, or public platforms for resource gossiping) bring us new type of members as well, recently our members are getting interested more in the cause than in the SF coaching. The projects started on voluntary basis, but at some of them we get financing too.

For our monthly useful conversations we started to invite for discussion some professionals who do not consider themselves as SF persons, but we know they are (like an NGO supporting drug addicts).

Kathleen Defoort from Flemish Belgium shared the following,

As Korzybski Institute in Brugge (Luc Isebaert, Myriam Le Fevere, Geert, Sébastien, ..) is the only one to organise a 4 YEAR COURSE - that's what is wanted by law to become psychotherapist, (although it still is no law... you know...) we all have our connection with them and the die-hard-ones already clung together with them.

Now, after 5 years of existence as a sub-national (no French or German speaking) organisation, we still are in search of our identity.

What works, what is wanted, ... always got as first answer " to be recognised politically".

Thank God this has come to an end now (fingers crossed).

We first had to make our structure as an association, with ethical, deontological code, connecting each other, asking money to be part of it (as proof of being serious)...

www.vvdo.be is the website, in Dutch, where you can see/read our glorious moments. Or FB page.

For **new starters**, it depends on how SF is starting up in your country.

I love to read how Hungary is building it up. Quite an inspirational boost for us, a challenge... Big chance this can be replicated.

Now we've come to:

1. **Knowing each other:** you can't believe how many things there are going on in a SF way, so we are still connecting each other. : equine therapy, dogs therapy, eating disorders, autism-guidance with booklets (Els Mattelin, autism and SF practice), Signs of Safety (governmental implication in Flanders), Figuring Figures (Elke Gybels, <http://figuringfutures.com/index.php/the-art-of-re-framing-challenges-creatively>), city shaping (Hannes Couvreur), helping people in and after detention (vzw touché: <http://www.vzwtouche.be/>), knitting... coaching projects... still finding out more existing good ideas.

www.15minutes4me.com = check it! Being on a waiting list, having SF coaching!

Being told 'hide in the bushes till someone asks you how you've done it' has made a sea of possibilities yet to uncover.

2. Writing down our **vision** to how psychotherapy is working (helping government and others to see the choices).

3. Starting up the fun !

As Korzybski brings in the 'knowing' stuff, we can go for the SF parties.

Well, let's say that's what I wish for the next months and years to come.

And I would bless all of you having this too!

What were our good reasons for setting up a National Association?

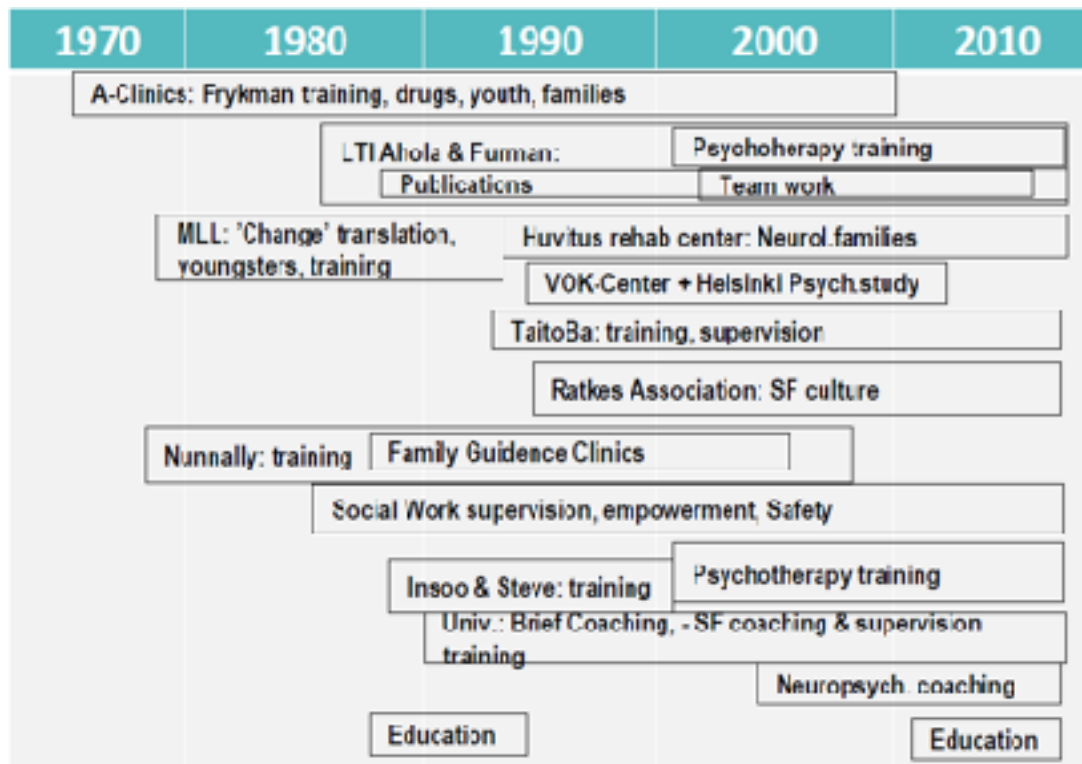
As we had to solve some political issues about recognition as a psychotherapist, it became obvious we needed a (sub) national association 'beroepsvereniging' of Solution Focused

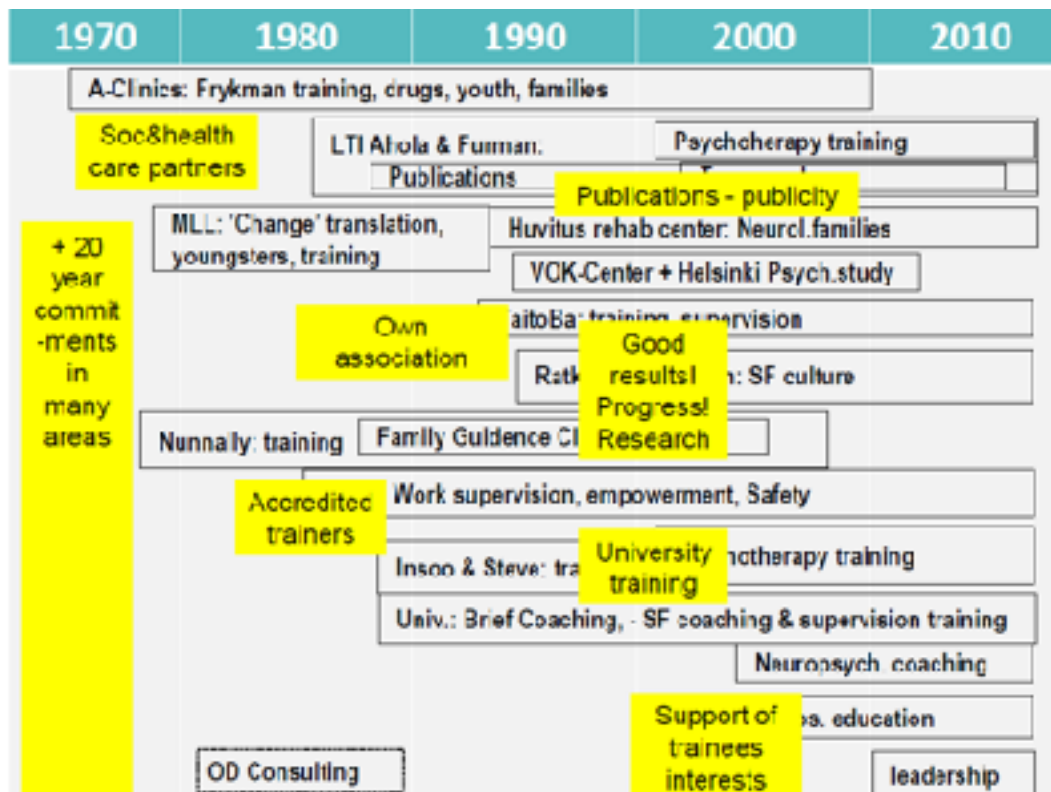
therapists and coaches. According to Belgian law there is only: cognitive behavioural psychology (ACT and mindfulness with this), Freudian's psychoanalysis/ psychodynamic, client-centred therapy (Gestalt in this) and systemic therapy.

Solution Focused is now part of the last one (<http://www.geestelijkgezondvlaanderen.be/psychotherapeutische-richtingen>).

So it's **needed** to have this association.

Peter Sundman from Finland shared the following slides from his presentation at the SF World Conference in Frankfurt





Responses collated by John Wheeler on 30 October 2018