

# **Psychological Applications and Trends**

## **2026**

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## FOREWORD

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Dear Participants,

This book contains a compilation of papers presented at the International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT) 2026, organized by the World Institute for Advanced Research and Science (WIARS), held in International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT) 2026, held in Madeira Island, Portugal, from 18 to 20 of April 2026. This conference serves as a platform for scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students to come together and share their latest findings, ideas, and insights in the field of psychology.

Over the next few days, we will be exploring some of the most cutting-edge research and theories in psychology. We have a diverse range of topics and speakers lined up for you, covering themes and sub-themes. The conference proceedings and program include eight main broad-ranging categories that cover diversified interest areas:

- **CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Emotions and related psychological processes; Assessment; Psychotherapy and counseling; Addictive behaviors; Eating disorders; Personality disorders; Quality of life and mental health; Communication within relationships; Services of mental health; and Psychopathology.
- **EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Language and cognitive processes; School environment and childhood disorders; Parenting and parenting related processes; Learning and technology; Psychology in schools; Intelligence and creativity; Motivation in classroom; Perspectives on teaching; Assessment and evaluation; and Individual differences in learning.
- **SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Cross-cultural dimensions of mental disorders; Employment issues and training; Organizational psychology; Psychology in politics and international issues; Social factors in adolescence and its development; Social anxiety and self-esteem; Immigration and social policy; Self-efficacy and identity development; Parenting and social support; Addiction and stigmatization; Psychological and social impact of virtual networks.
- **LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Violence and trauma; Mass-media and aggression; Intra-familial violence; Juvenile delinquency; Aggressive behavior in childhood; Internet offending; Working with crime perpetrators; Forensic psychology; Violent risk assessment; Law enforcement and stress.
- **COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Perception, memory, and attention; Decision making and problem-solving; Concept formation, reasoning, and judgment; Language processing; Learning skills and education; Cognitive Neuroscience; Computer analogies and information processing (Artificial Intelligence and computer simulations); Social and cultural factors in the cognitive approach; Experimental methods, research and statistics; Biopsychology.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Environmental behaviour studies; Place attachment, Restorative environments; Pro-environmental behavior; Architectural psychology; Environment Psychology Theories and Methods; Environmental risk perception and management; Environmental impact assessment; Environmental consciousness; Interdisciplinary research.
- **HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY:** Biological, Physiological and Cognitive Models; Research methods and measurement; Individual differences and Habits; Illness-related and sick role beliefs; Acute and chronic illness; Dealing with Pain; Health Promotion and Intervention.
- **PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL PSYCHOTHERAPY:** Psychoanalysis and psychology; The unconscious; The Oedipus complex; Psychoanalysis of children; Pathological mourning; Addictive personalities; Borderline organizations; Narcissistic personalities; Anxiety and phobias; Psychosis; Neuropsychoanalysis.

InPACT 2026 received 472 submissions, from more than 43 different countries all over the world, reviewed by a double-blind process. Submissions were prepared to take the form of Oral Presentations, Posters and Virtual Presentations. 157 submissions (overall, 33% acceptance rate) were accepted for presentation at the conference.

As we all know, psychology is a vast and complex field that encompasses a wide range of topics, from the study of human behaviour to the workings of the brain. It is a field that has made enormous strides in recent years, and it continues to evolve at a rapid pace. At this conference, we hope to not only share the latest research and developments in psychology but also to foster a sense of community and collaboration among attendees. We believe that by working together, we can continue to advance the field of psychology and make important contributions to our understanding of the human mind and behaviour.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of our speakers, sponsors, and attendees for making this conference possible. This book includes an extensive variety of contributors and presenters that are hereby sharing with us their different personal, academic, and cultural experiences.

The conference also includes:

- A Keynote presentation by Dr. Jaime Craig (Chair of the Association of Clinical Psychologists UK (ACP-UK)).
- A Special Talk by Prof. Clara Pracana (Full and Training Member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Portugal).

This volume is composed with the full content of the accepted submissions of the International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT 2026). We hope that this book of proceedings will be a valuable resource for those in attendance, as well as for those who could not join us. Thank you for your participation, and we look forward to a productive and stimulating event!

Lastly, we would like to thank all the authors and participants, the members of the academic scientific committee, and, of course, the organizing and administration team for making and putting this conference together.

Looking forward to continuing our collaboration in the future,

Prof. Clara Pracana

*Full and Training Member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Portugal*

*Conference and Program Co-Chair*

Prof. Michael Wang

*Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Leicester, United Kingdom*

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## KEYNOTE LECTURE

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### THE APPLICATION OF PSYCHOLOGY IN THE FAMILY COURTS – CONTROVERSIES, PSEUDOSCIENCE AND PSEUDO EXPERTS

**Dr. Jaime Craig**

*Chair of the Association of Clinical Psychologists UK (ACP-UK)  
United Kingdom*

#### Abstract

For many years, psychological opinion has been pivotal in some of the most life changing decisions for children and their families in family courts worldwide. Nowhere has this been more evident, and the evidence more polarised and controversial than in cases which include allegations of ‘parental alienation’ / alienating behaviours. This paper will consider how in these cases psychology theories and the evidence from psychologist experts has been utilised to either promote or erode children’s rights, to safeguard or silence victims.

Serious loopholes in the regulation of psychologists in the UK persist and this has allowed for the evidence from unregulated and unqualified psychologist ‘experts’ to be admitted in these cases and promote pseudoscience unfettered. Successive efforts to improve the rigour of psychologist expert evidence and its use in the family courts led to the development of joint Family Justice Council & British Psychological Society guidance for psychologist expert witnesses (Craig et al., 2023) and in December 2024 new family court guidance for how allegations of ‘parental alienation’/alienating behaviours are responded to.

This presentation will chart the development of these guidelines and engagement with policy makers as an example of wider attempts to safeguard the public when accessing psychological advice and services.

The growing standing, influence and recognition of psychological science brings with it huge responsibility for how this power is wielded. Psychology is inherently impactful and as a discipline we need to take this seriously, call out its misuse and insist on rigour and accountability.

**Keywords:** *Pseudoscience, regulation, justice, ethical practice, accountability.*

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#### Biography

Jaime is Chair of the Association of Clinical Psychologists UK (ACP-UK) and has many years of experience as an expert witness in the Family Courts in the UK. He is a qualified clinical psychologist and former Chair of the Children and Young People Faculty of the Division of Clinical Psychology of the British Psychological Society. He has led ACP-UK’s campaign to expose and prevent the appointment of bogus psychological expert witnesses who claim expertise in the “diagnosis” of “parental alienation” leading to the scandalous removal of children from the custody of their mothers. This is an international problem being repeated in courts in many other countries outside the UK.



## SPECIAL TALK

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### **ANTONIO DAMÁSIO'S THEORIES VS. PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL THEORIES: BODY, AFFECT, AND SUBJECTIVITY IN CONTRAST WITH MATURANA AND VARELA**

**Prof. Dr. Clara Pracana**

*Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy,  
Lisbon (Portugal)*

#### **Abstract**

Over the past decades, psychological theory has increasingly moved away from purely cognitive models of mind toward frameworks that place the body, affect, and biological processes at the center of mental life. Among the most influential contributions to this shift are the neurobiological theories of António Damásio, the long-standing psychoanalytic tradition, and the biological epistemology of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. Although these approaches share a rejection of disembodied cognition, they diverge significantly in their accounts of affect, subjectivity, and psychological suffering. This paper contrasts Damásio's theory of natural intelligence and consciousness with psychoanalytic models of the mind, and further situates both in relation to the autopoietic theory of cognition proposed by Maturana and Varela. The aim is not theoretical integration, but conceptual clarification: identifying what each framework explains, where its limits lie, and why psychoanalysis retains a distinct relevance for clinical psychology.

**Keywords:** *Neurobiology, Damásio, psychoanalysis, consciousness, autopoietic theory of cognition, Maturana & Varela.*

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#### **Biography**

Clara Pracana is a psychoanalyst, psychotherapist, coach, author and lecturer. She was born in the Azores, Portugal. She has a Ph.D. in Applied Psychology and a Masters in Clinical Psychology and Psychopathology. She is a founding and full member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy, Portugal. She is a regular lecturer on psychoanalytical topics and has published several papers and four books. She is also a certified coach with the International Coaching Community (ICC). As a psychoanalyst, counselor, and coach, she has a private practice in Lisbon. Her research addresses anxiety, guilt and shame, depression, emotional intelligence, leadership, change, motivation, and group dynamics.



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