

From 26-27 September 2024, students Tija Dvojmoč, Iza Jensko and Evelin Luštek attended the FemCities Conference '24 "Mental Health or Mental Load?" at Sigmund Freud Private University in Vienna, where we focused on women's mental health.

We were welcomed by Iris Lager, Alfred Pritz, Ricarda Goetz-Preisner and Erzsébeth Tóth, and then spent some time getting to know each other with fun questions.

This was followed by presentations by the key speakers. The first presentation highlighted the term "unlearning", which we had encountered for the first time. It is an interesting concept of "unlearning" the norms set for women in a patriarchal society, questioning expectations of what they should become. How to "unlearn" the learned expectations that society hangs on women, and the important role that "unlearning" plays for future psychotherapists.

"Before psychotherapists can create an unlearning space for the clients, they must learn to unlearn themselves."

We continued with a presentation on Mental Health in Vienna, looking at the history as well as the current situation and the possible psychosocial resources the city has to offer.

After lunch, the conference continued with a Fishbowl debate, where all participants had the opportunity to give their opinions and questions on the presentations, and to share their own experiences on the topics we covered. The discussion brought us to the topic of privilege in the society we live in. What does it mean to be a woman in a "man leading world", and to be a member of a minority on top of that.

After a short break, we continued with different supervision groups. We decided to take part in a workshop entitled "Queen bee or motherhood", in which we discussed whether it was a question of choice or a question of balancing both aspects. We also wrote a letter to both roles, shared what importance we attach to them and finally found that this differs between us.

The next day we again achieved a pleasant atmosphere by mentalizing each other, followed by "World Café" groups. We were able to attend two.

The first one we chose was the Sigmund Freud Outreach Client Clinic, which was particularly interesting for us as students of SFU Ljubljana. We talked about the functioning of the clinic at SFU Vienna and had the opportunity to compare the practices and laws related to psychotherapy in different countries. We realised that the situation regarding psychotherapeutic access and work in Austria is still not perfect, but it is still more advanced than in Slovenia.

Later on, we attended a workshop presented by Vilnius Women's House. The topic was post-traumatic growth and how to recognise it, with a special focus on female victims of sexual violence. We also discussed how to approach and react when a victim confides her traumatic experience to us, which as future psychotherapists we found particularly important and informative.

Unfortunately, due to logistical problems, we had to leave the conference early and were therefore unable to attend the cultural part in the afternoon.

We found the event very entertaining and worthwhile, especially through the eyes of the young female students. It was an honour to be a small part of something so big and important. Women's voices have often been overlooked in the history of psychotherapy, so it is important that we come together to make our voices louder. Let's unlearn to only look for Sigmund Freud, but also ask ourselves, where is Anna Freud?

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