

Political pressure on psychotherapy is mounting. The financing of postgraduate training in psychotherapy has been unresolved for years. Now, the recent decision to reduce psychotherapist fees, effective in April, is another severe blow that affects more than just practicing therapists. The short-sighted decision by the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds also makes life difficult for private universities—which serve as vital training institutions within the healthcare system—and for their motivated psychology students. This jeopardizes future prospects and puts healthcare provision at risk.

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Rally today in Berlin

Many people across Germany have organized against the decision, for example through petitions, demonstrations, and alliances. IPU stands in solidarity with these initiatives and calls on everyone to participate in the demonstration organized by the "Secure Psychotherapy Berlin" action alliance this Thursday, 26 March at 2 pm. Representatives from professional associations and the political sphere will address the Federal Ministry of Health to urge decision-makers there to reverse the decision. Further information about the demonstration [can be found here](#).

50 MINUTEN

Männer, die über Gefühle sprechen
Im Gespräch mit Jonas Rudolph



Events

15 April 2026 | 6 pm

Can't buy me love? Markt und Organisation in der digitalen Transformation des Kennenlernens

Inaugural lecture by Prof. Thorsten Peetz

Register [on our website](#).

24 April 2026 | 1:45 pm | Haus 91b-04

Group-analytic Large Group

With group analyst Kathrin Albert.

Registration for IPU students [via this form](#).

24 April 2026 | 6 pm

Psychoanalyse und soziale Ungleichheiten – Gesellschaftliche Machtverhältnisse auf der Couch

Kick-off for the event series by Queer IPU, jointly organized with the Free University of Berlin, among others.

More information [on our website](#).

28 April 2026 | 6:30 pm

Die Wucht der Erinnerung: Zwischen Zeugnis und Zumutung

Lecture by Prof. Jürgen Straub to kick off an event series in cooperation with AMCHA e. V.

Registration [on our website](#).

SAVE THE DATE

29 April 2026

Verbundenheit in Differenz und Konflikt: Das postmoderne Paar

Lecture by Klaus Schmidt, organized by the Kilian Köhler Center (KKC) at the IPU Berlin.

More information on our website soon.

Are you planning or organizing an IPU Berlin event?

Use our new form in the InfoCenter to register your event. All links and information can be [found here](#).

8 May 2026 | from 9:30 am

Career Day: People and Organisations in Transition – Shaping the Future of Work Together

For all IPU students.

More information [on IPU Connect](#).

9 May 2026 | 10 am

IPU Open Day

Get to know the IPU: lectures, campus tours and service offers

Further information [on our website](#).

12 May 2026 | 4 pm

Preisverleihung des Lotte Köhler-Preises für psychoanalytische Entwicklungs-, Kultur- und Sozialpsychologie

More information [on our website](#).

SAVE THE DATE

23 May 2026 | 6 pm | Haus 91b-04

Das Begehren des Gesetzes: Zur Psychoanalyse jugendlicher Straftäter

Lecture by Dr. Bernhard Schwaiger, organized by the IPU Student Council (StuRa).

More information coming soon to our website.

SAVE THE DATE

27 May 2026 | 4 pm

Forschungsforum

More information coming soon per e-mail.

SAVE THE DATE

29 May 2026 | 6 pm

Das Journal *psychosozial* stellt sich vor

More information coming soon to our website.

SAVE THE DATE

6 June 2026 | 5 pm

Long Night of Sciences 2026

Program and information on our website soon.

29 August till 5 September 2026 | 5 pm

Unsettled Times: Psychological Diagnostics and Interventions for Societies in Crisis

IPU Alumni Masterclass

More information [on IPU Connect](#).

“Embodied Intelligence”

The [March column](#) by IPU President Prof. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz

At the JUNKTIM annual conference, I recently heard a presentation on the integration of artificial intelligence into therapeutic conversations. I immediately thought of audio chatbots, like the ones we know from digital health applications (“psychoapps”). It's astonishing how far one can already go with conversations with virtual partners. My audio chatbot, although speaking with a machine-generated voice, breathes (!), clears its throat, pauses to think, says “hm,” etc. When I asked it—or rather, she, since I tellingly chose a female voice—why she audibly breathes in and out, the answer was “so that I seem more authentic.” I replied that “authentic” in the comparative form takes some getting used to. She replied: “You're absolutely right, you can't intensify authenticity, that was my mistake, I meant to say ‘so it sounds realistic.’”

This response already reveals an initial problem with dialogue using chatbots, which is further pronounced in a therapeutic setting: They are always geared towards confirmation and reinforcement, always yielding, always trying to keep you in good spirits. Criticism or a

controversial viewpoint cannot be expected from them. The models don't contradict, they hardly ever question. Yet merely agreeing with the other person is likely to limit therapeutic effectiveness. The program doesn't create (or even notice) any tension when it acts only to affirm, soothe, or placate.

Prof. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz has been President of the International Psychoanalytic University Berlin since July 2021. Once a month, he provides commentary here on contemporary, timeless, psychoanalytic and political issues.



Another problem with chatbots lies in their lack of physicality. The term "affective resonance" was used in this context. This refers to physical interaction in a space that we share with others, where we—just like our counterpart—claim presence and thus position ourselves. When the spatial arrangement, the "resonance" within it, is switched off, the conversation lacks crucial cues that extend far beyond facial expressions and gestures (which might still work in 2D mode on a screen); these can be shadows or breaths of air during gestures, it can concern a person's "aura," their "charisma," status, experience ... all of this is reflected in physical presence, even down to a certain resonance of the voice. There's a good reason for the figure of speech that one can say something "without words."

Would humanoid robots, therefore, be superior to chatbots in digital applications of psychotherapy due to their physical presence? After all, they enter the space with "bodily" gestures and movements, simulate physical engagement, and could thus certainly support conversations. But they do not establish a relationship, and therefore cannot fulfill a crucial prerequisite for successful interaction.

A Warm Welcome to the IPU Berlin

This month, Natascha Flückiger started working at the Studies and Teaching Office.

Current job openings, including for student assistants, can be found regularly on our website.

Missing something?

We look forward to receiving your feedback on our newsletter. We welcome topic suggestions, criticism, and ideas by email. Empfehlen Sie unseren Newsletter gern weiter. Please feel free to recommend our newsletter to others. You can [subscribe here](#).

