



Coaching and Coaching Psychology in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Coaching is still mostly an unrecognized profession in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), and coaching psychology is an undeveloped field. Psychology is generally a very young profession and scientific area of study in BiH.

BiH got its first MA in psychology in 1975. The Departments of Psychology were opened at the University of Sarajevo in 1989, and at the University of Banja Luka in 1994. Before this, the only psychology training was a joint pedagogy/psychology BA, taught at the Faculty of Pedagogy. Many see this late start due to the Communist Party's suspicion of psychologists' abilities to effect personal change, promote freedom and self-determination, and the belief that they supported political reform (Adler, Mueller & Ayat, 1993; Milosavljevic, 2002; Krnetic & Pasic, 2005; Corkalo-Biruski, Jerkovic, Zotovic & Krnetic, 2007).

At the beginning of the nineties, after the breakdown of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, psychology in BiH has started to develop intensively. This especially referred to crisis interventions with acutely traumatized persons caused by war loss and work on overcoming prolonged traumas with refugees and persons with PTSD. After the war, NGOs developed and implemented numerous psychosocial projects and the first private psychological practice began with work in Banja Luka in 2004 (Krnetic & Pasic, 2005).

Considering the fact that psychology in BiH is a relatively young profession compared to the other European countries, it is not surprising at all that seeking the psychological help and support – such as for treating psychopathology (psychotherapy) or coping with emotional and interpersonal problems (counselling), as well as for improvement of personal, interpersonal or business performance (coaching) – in BiH is still seen as a proof of personal weakness and incapability. For that reason, people prefer to keep quiet about their private and professional problems. Even if they decide to get psychological treatment and support, it is mostly in cases when they have already developed psychopathological symptoms.

My personal experience indicates that the clients still very rarely schedule the first treatment in my private practice for the sole purpose of coaching. In fact, the clients mostly opt for personal / life coaching only after they are convinced by the efficiency of the application of the cognitive behavioural principles and techniques in the treatment of psychopathology and/or emotional and interpersonal problems for which they would initially seek my help, and then they would decide to try out the efficiency of cognitive behavioural principles and techniques for

the improvement of their personal and/or professional life.

Business / executive coaching in BiH is mostly connected with the arrival of the top managers from abroad. A great number of local companies in BiH have been privatized and sold to the foreign owners that imported these top managers from abroad. Since they have started to inquire about the business / executive coaching in BiH, some of the local businessmen and managers that previously came to me seeking cognitive behavioural therapy or stress management have put me in contact with them, and that is how I have entered the exciting world of the business / executive coaching.

To my knowledge, there is no official organization that brings together the coaches from BiH, nor is there an informal network of such type. Even in the psychological and business magazines or Internet sites in BiH there is surprisingly very few articles about coaching. In rare cases when written media publish articles about this topic, it is usually about experiences from abroad, and almost never about experiences from BiH. There is still no organized training for coaches in BiH.

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Biography

Igor Krnetic is Psychotherapist, Counselor & Coach in Private Practice in Banja Luka, BiH; Member of the Society for Coaching Psychology; President of Bosnia and Herzegovina Association for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; Director of Professional Training in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in BiH; Albert Ellis Institute Associate Fellow and Certified Supervisor for Training in Rational Emotive and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

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We are continually exploring options for connecting our members and looking at how to provide forums for sharing ideas, discussing issues, disseminating research findings, etc. One such initiative is the creation of a Society for Coaching Psychology LinkedIn group, where you can connect with others involved in or interested in coaching psychology. If you are a member of LinkedIn you can find the group at:

[http://www.linkedin.com/groupInvitation?
groupID=1034457&sharedKey=63F36D41BF92.](http://www.linkedin.com/groupInvitation?groupID=1034457&sharedKey=63F36D41BF92)

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