



13th International Conference on the Dialogical Self

25-28 AUGUST 2026
THESSALONIKI

Dialogical Change Processes: Psychotherapy through the Lens of the Innovative Moments Model and the Dialogical Self

Miguel M. Gonçalves
Professor, School of Psychology
University of Minho

This keynote presents a clinically grounded perspective on psychological change, grounded in Dialogical Self Theory and the Innovative Moments (IM) model. Psychological suffering often emerges from rigid or monological dialogical patterns that constrain alternative ways of feeling, thinking, and relating. Psychotherapy can therefore be understood as a process of restoring dialogical flexibility, enabling neglected or emerging voices to be heard, and fostering more adaptive internal negotiations. The Innovative Moments model offers clinicians a process-sensitive framework for observing and facilitating change in real time. Innovative moments are narrative markers in which clients step outside maladaptive frameworks of meaning, signaling shifts in action, reflection, emotional experience, identity, or relational positioning. Clinical research shows that more frequent and more elaborate IMs are associated with better therapeutic outcomes. Current research extends this framework by examining how innovative moments can be actively facilitated through specific dialogical and relational processes. Particular attention is given to the micro-dynamics of change, including how therapists and clients co-construct innovative moments. Ongoing studies explore structured interventions designed to prompt innovative moments, the role of therapist responsiveness in sustaining them, and how these processes operate across individual and group psychotherapy contexts. The clinical and research implications of this process-oriented perspective will be discussed, highlighting its relevance for understanding mechanisms of change, enhancing therapist sensitivity to emerging transformation, and clarifying how small dialogical shifts accumulate into enduring psychological change.