

## Empowering the Practice of Psychology in the Field of Health Promotion

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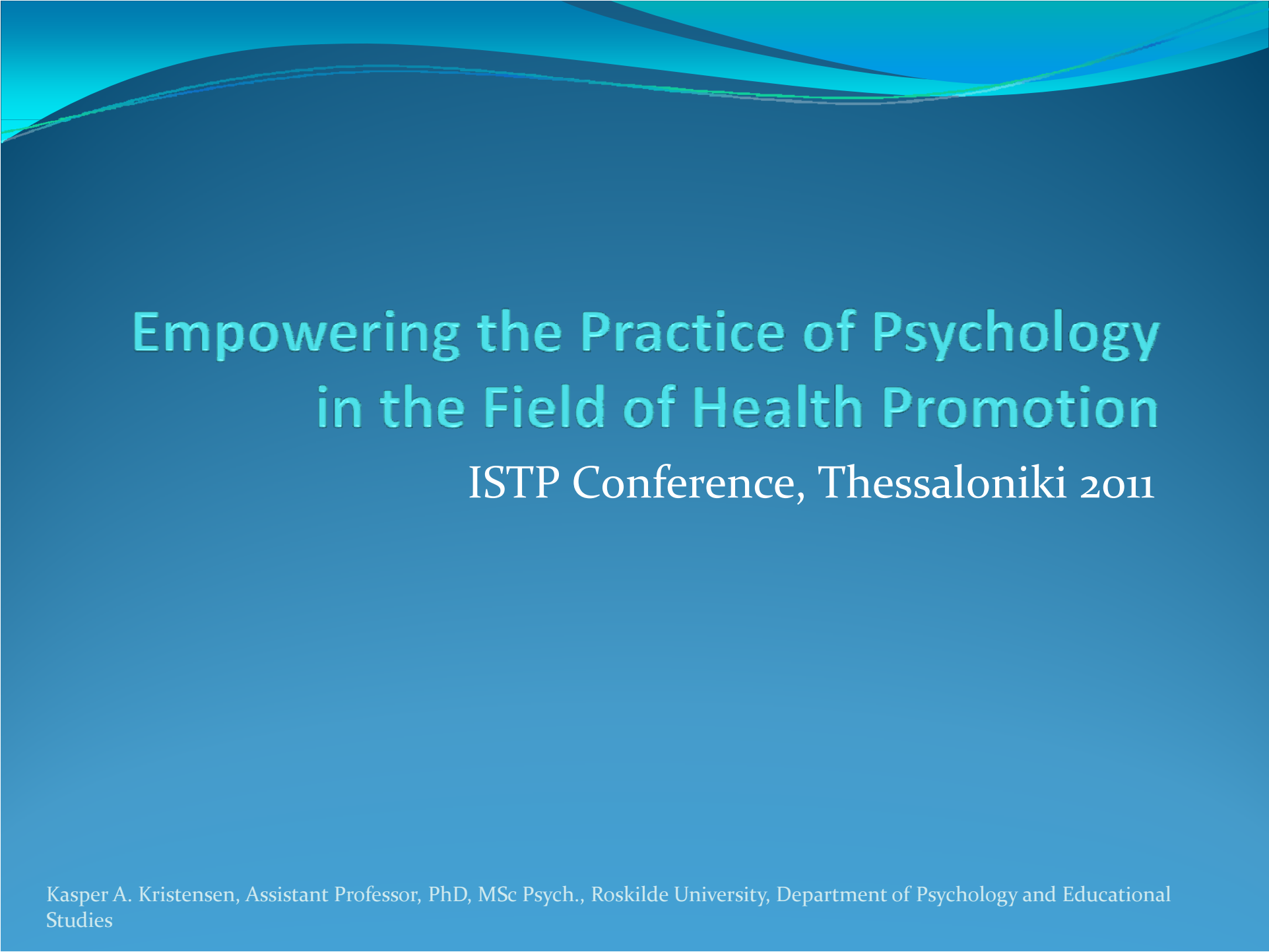
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# Empowering the Practice of Psychology in the Field of Health Promotion

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# Problematic

**HEALTH PROMOTION**

**EMPOWERMENT**

**COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THEORIES?**

**CRITICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**LIFE CONDUCT**

**LIFE STYLE**

# The new and unsettled field of health promotion

- Changed demographics
- Increased prosperity
- Welfare
- Changing civil demands
- New technologies

**HEALTH PROMOTION**

Problem of theory

**MEDICAL  
SERVICES**




# Timeline

- 1946: WHO: Health as a positive concept  
“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”
- Antonovsky (1979; 1987): salutogenesis, coping
- 1986: The Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion
- Green & Tones (2009): Health promotion as a discipline



# Ottawa charter on health

“To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group *must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment.* Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Therefore, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy life-styles to well-being.” (WHO, Ottawa Charter, 1986)

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- A holistic health concept
    - peace, housing, food, employment, education, health care access, civil rights
  - Health - relational thinking of an subject and a social environment
  - Action theory of health (Nordenfelt, Wackerhausen, Whitbeck, Pörn)
    - ”The subjects capacity and resources to realize vital goals”
  - -> The power to produce the ”good life”



# Empowerment

- “Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health.”
- Empowerment (Freire, Pedagogy of the oppressed, 1972)
- Expansive community empowerment



# Health promotion as political ideology

- Political Ideology (Green & Tones, 2009):
  - Health as human rights
  - Equity
  - Individual, group and cultural autonomy
    - **Participation**
    - **Partnership**
    - **Enablement**
    - **Advocacy**
    - **Facilitation**

# Psychological theory in health promotion

- Cognitive behavioral theories
- The Health Belief Model
- Health Act Model (Green)
- The transtheoretical model (Prochaska & )
- Social Cognitive Behaviour theory (Bandura)
- (- Positive Psychology?)

# Dis-empowerment theories?

- Behavior
- Only vaguely contextualized and situated
- Individualistic
- Expert perspective
- Change of predetermined behaviours
- Motivation work
- Empowering as increased self regulation

# Critical Psychology as an empowerment psychology?

- Berlin-Copenhagen school of critical psychology (Holzkamp, 1983; Dreier, 1993)
- From Cultural Historical Activity theory
- A psychology from the subjects standpoint
- Activity theory
- Participation - in social structures of practice (Dreier, 1999)



# Empowerment theory?

- Co-research, practice research, action research
- Critical-constructive
- AIM: To increase the subjects influence and command of the social production of relevant living conditions
- Psychosocial understandings of psychological distress



## *'the conduct of life'*

- Problem: researching understandings of health in the subjects settings, environments and practices of everyday life?
- The daily conduct of life (Holzkamp, forthcoming; 1998; Dreier, 2009)
- The continuous structuring of practices, social tasks, relations and life conditions in the subjects embodied processual and social activities and life experiences
- The production of a "good life"

# A discussion of the concept of '*life style*' in health promotion

- Life style (Weber, Cockerham, Rütten & Abel, 1995)
- Life style related diseases
- Lifestyle as an emergent but underconceptualized concept in socialmedical research and theory, (Coreil, Levin & Jaco, 1985)
- Stable patterns of behaviour, consumption, cognitions, social beliefs
- Individual choices, habits
- Constrained by "life chances", class, culture, habitus



# Life style and lebensführung

- Weber triadic concepts (Cockerham, Rütten & Abel, 1995):
  - Lifestyle
  - Life chances
  - ---
  - Life conduct (choices, self direction)



# Comparative discussion

## Life style

- A game of categorization and typification:  
"affluent achievers", "settled suburbans" etc.
- Consumption, leisure and risk behaviors

## Life conduct

- Overlooks socially and historical situated particularities, dynamics and complexities of life conduct through extreme generalization
- Productive, structuring activities



# Comparative discussion

## Life style

- Assumption of stable homogenous patterns of habits and styles of consumption
- Sociocultural patterns and meanings

## Life conduct

- Focus on changes, transitions, conflicts, projects , balances
- The handling of cultural complexities and diversity



# Comparative discussion

## Life style

- Status, safety
- Identity (Giddens)

## Life conduct

- Enable struggles, projects  
different reasons, goals,
- Coming to an understanding  
with yourself and others  
(Holzkamp, 1998)



# Questions and concerns

- A prospective field for critical psychologies?
- Will psychology continue to be a reactionary force in this field?
- Coaching approaches and the commercialization of the health market?