

One for all, all for one

Since their institutionalisation in France in 2006, therapeutic communities have occupied a unique place in the field of addiction treatment. Created originally to enable individuals to distance themselves from risky substances and environments, they have evolved in line with changes in the sector: the development of outpatient care, recognition of harm reduction, diversification of the profiles of those receiving support, and changes in public policy, etc.

We understand that these developments may have impacted the comprehensibility and visibility of residential care and the community model. However, the specific nature of therapeutic communities remains and is constantly reinforced: using the community as a lever for care, empowerment and reconstruction.

In therapeutic communities, support is based on the strong but challenging belief: individual evolution is possible thanks to group members, and everyone contributes, through their investment in the community, to the progress of all. This interdependence, summed up by our motto ‘One for all, all for one’, is both the strength of the community model of therapeutic communities and a constant focus for reflection.

Indeed, how can we build a common collective framework while ensuring personalised support tailored to the needs and profiles of residents? How can we maintain and sustain the collective, even when the breakdowns and difficult life journeys of certain individuals may require a significant investment from the group? What methods should be used when a person relapse without compromising the care of other residents? How do individual aspects nourish, guide and renew the collective? In a societal and political context dominated by individualism and self-isolation, what elements enable the collective to continue to thrive?

These are some of the questions that will be addressed at the 2026 European Conference on Therapeutic Communities.

A European conference rooted in contemporary issues

The *European Federation of Therapeutic Communities* (EFTC) is the European network of therapeutic communities. It supports the development of a community approach and acts as a voice for professionals and residents of therapeutic communities on a European level. Every two years, its Conference provides an important opportunity for European stakeholders to meet, reflect and share ideas.

In 2026, France will host the 20th European Conference of Therapeutic Communities in Bordeaux on 22, 23 and 24 September. hosting this event is part of a long history and commitment: The Fédération Addiction, France's leading addiction network, is responsible for bringing together French therapeutic communities and has been committed for many years to working on the challenges of residential care in addiction treatment.

The 2026 Conference aims to provide a space for critical and prospective reflection, seeking to clarify the role of therapeutic communities in the organisation of care, based on their practices, values, the benefits of the model, and the realities they are faced with.

Key themes of the conference

1. One for all: abstinence, harm reduction and individualised pathways

Therapeutic communities offer an environment that promotes abstinence, while adapting to changing practices and needs. How can we support people who relapse without breaking the bond or compromising the collective dynamic? How can we combine abstinence support and harm reduction without opposing these approaches? What role can the group play in preventing 'relapses' and promoting recovery?

This theme focuses on the community's ability to accommodate individual trajectories while maintaining a meaningful common framework.

2. All for one: peer support as a driver of recovery

Peer support is at the heart of the community model. It is a powerful lever for recognition and empowerment for those receiving support. How can we support the active participation of the members? How can we support those who wish to become involved in the organisation of the TC, receive training or become professionals? How can we spread this community culture and empowerment beyond therapeutic communities?

This theme explores the conditions under which peer support can remain a transformative force within therapeutic communities.

3. Growing together: innovations and emerging practices

Therapeutic communities have always been places of experimentation. How can we welcome new profiles and practices (chemsex, gambling, psychiatric comorbidities, gender diversity)? What role should families play? How can we design, implement and evaluate innovations developed in the field?

Since their origins, therapeutic communities have been places of experimentation and adaptation. Today, they are faced with welcoming new profiles and behaviours: chemsex, gambling, coexisting psychiatric disorders, gender diversity, etc. How can these groups be best welcomed into treatment? What role should families and loved ones play? How can we design, implement and evaluate innovations developed in the field, sometimes within restrictive frameworks? What impact does the evolution of these different populations have on TCs, and more broadly the evolution of professional practices, have on the TC model?

This theme looks at the ability of therapeutic communities to innovate without losing what defines their identity.

4. Standing together: political challenges and the future of therapeutic communities

In an uncertain political and economic context, therapeutic communities must assert their added value and defend a model based on solidarity, community and long-term recovery. What are the regulatory frameworks and funding methods in France and Europe? What threats are weighing on residential community care and what levers for collective action can be mobilised?

This theme invites political and strategic reflection on the future of therapeutic communities and their ability to stand together collectively.