

# Changing the Name of the AHP

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In the current issue of *AHP Perspective*, the monthly newsletter which comes out of San Francisco, there are two articles discussing the idea of changing the name of the AHP to the Association for Humanistic Perspectives.

The argument is that the AHP has never been exclusively or even primarily for psychologists. Over and over again we have had to explain to newcomers that they can join even though they have never studied psychology. In our introductory leaflet we say: 'You don't need a degree in psychology or any formal qualifications.' Wouldn't it be easier to have a name where we didn't have to explain this all the time? And in a post-modern age, holding to one discipline is no longer a good idea: what we are more about is a post-modern human science. The word 'psychology' has become more of an embarrassment than an advantage, especially since academic psychology has for many years now avoided the study of persons over the age of three, preferring to study rats (1930s to 1960s), babies (1970s) and computers (1980s to date).

The argument against is that the AHP has a long history and a well established identity. Why abandon something stable and recognisable in favour of something untried, which newcomers might or

might not associate with the original name?

Another argument is that there is no change in policy linked with the new name. Usually when a name is changed it means some change in the underlying reality: here there is none such — the AHP has always been open to everyone. And humanistic psychology has always been an interdisciplinary field, making use of the work of humanistically identified philosophers, political scientists, sociologists and economists. There is a core of accomplished work which has been built up over the years under the label of humanistic psychology.

The final question is whether the membership wants the change. If large numbers were hotly opposed to it, that would be divisive and unwelcome. The AHP in the United States is canvassing its members about this: what do we think? We do have one question which the Americans do not have to consider: the AHPP. Would it change its name too, perhaps to the Association of Humanistic Perspective Psychology? Or would it want to retain its present name? And if the latter, what difficulties would that bring with it? Your comments are invited. The AHP Committee is at present discussing these questions.