**Seminar with Tatjana Schnell on Meaning-Making and Health 24.08.12**

**Location:**

**Programme**

10:00-10:45: Talk 1 - "Sources of meaning - immanent and transcendent"

11:00-11:45: Talk 2 - "Why meaning matters: Meaning in life, well-being and health"

12:00-13:00: Lunch

14:00-16:00: Workshop: Exploring personal meaning

**Abstract Talk 1: Sources of meaning - immanent and transcendent**

People draw on a multitude of sources of meaning – some of them related to a transcendent reality or power, others immanent and anchored in this world. This talk will give an account of the identification, assessment and distribution of sources of meaning. Empirical results demonstrate that some sources of meaning are more likely to generate experiences of meaningfulness than others, and that *diversity* and *depth* of sources of meaning matter. With reference to the *hierarchic model of meaning*, various levels of meaning-making in everyday life will be illustrated, and linkages to personality will be described.

**Abstract Talk 2: Why meaning matters: Meaning in life, well-being and health**

Is a meaningful life necessarily a pleasant life? Philosophical roots of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being will be discussed and applied to the discourse on meaning. Empirical correlations between meaningfulness, crisis of meaning, and well-being will be interpreted, and the concept of Existential Indifference introduced. Is meaning ‘healthy’? Meaning in life is understood to motivate committed and goal-oriented living, and thus to contribute to an active, healthy life-style. While an absence of meaningfulness is not necessarily distressing, a perceived *lack* of meaning certainly is.

**Recommended Readings:**

Schnell, T. (2009). [The Sources of Meaning and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (SoMe): Relations to demographics and well-being](http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content%3Da916625082~db%3Dall~jumptype%3Drss%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). Journal of Positive Psychology, 4 (6), 483-499.

Schnell, T. (2011). Individual differences in meaning-making: Considering the variety of sources of meaning, their density and diversity. Personality and Individual Differences, 51 (5), 667-673. [doi:10.1016/j.paid.2011.06.006](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2011.06.006%22%20%5Ct%20%22doilink)

**Optionally**:

Schnell, T. (2010). [Existential Indifference: Another Quality of Meaning in Life.](http://jhp.sagepub.com/content/50/3/351.abstract%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 50 (3), 351-373.

Schnell, T. & Keenan, W.J.F. (2011). Meaning-Making in an Atheist World. Archive for the Psychology of Religion, 33 (1), 55-78. (PDF can be downloaded here: [www.sinnforschung.org](http://www.sinnforschung.org/archives/category/wissenschaftlich))

**Bio**

Tatjana Schnell studied psychology and protestant theology in Göttingen, London and Heidelberg. She did a Master of Philosophy in Theology in Cambridge (UK), and a PhD in psychology in Trier (Germany). After working as a researcher and lecturer in the psychology of personality, individual differences and assessment at the University of Trier, she moved to Innsbruck (Austria) in 2005. Since then, she is in charge of the psychology of personality and individual differences in the Institute of Psychology, Innsbruck University. Her main research interests are meaning in life; secularity, religiosity and spirituality; and integrative models of personality. She is a member of the editorial board of the Archive of the Psychology of Religion, the Journal of Implicit Religion and the Welsh Journal of Psychology, and a reviewer for many international journals. She is currently working on a multidimensional model of secularity, the development of a meaning-supportive intervention for cancer patients, and a government-funded representative study of giftedness and meaning.