MONA WILHELMSSON GÖSTAS is a social worker, licensed psychotherapist and authorized supervisor of psychotherapy. After working as a psychotherapist in Luleå she moved to Örebro in 2002 and has since then worked at the Psychotherapy Centre within the public psychiatric services in Örebro County Council and partly at a private practice, St: Lukasmottageningen in Örebro.

Initiated from a data collection conducted at the Psychotherapy Centre measuring psychotherapy patients’ interpersonal and attachment characteristics she decided to investigate these characteristics scientifically and also to investigate patients’ experiences of problems and changing of problems and their experiences of psychotherapy. She started her doctoral studies at the School of Health and Medical Sciences, Örebro University, in 2004 and has conducted her research at the Psychiatric Research Centre, Örebro County Council.

Patients’ attachment styles are relevant to psychotherapy since they highlight the way a person handles interpersonal and emotional stress.

The overall aim of this thesis was to examine how psychotherapy patients in public mental health care report attachment styles related to interpersonal problems before and after psychotherapy and also to examine patients’ experiences of problems, changes and experiences of psychotherapy given with cognitive behavioural oriented therapy (CBT) or psychodynamic oriented psychotherapy (PDT).

The results show that the patients, who were diagnosed with mood disorders, anxiety disorders, adjustment disorders and personality disorders, at the start of therapy reported insecure avoidant and anxious attachment styles that correlated positively with interpersonal problems. Psychotherapy with either CBT or PDT enabled them to turn avoidant and anxious attachment styles to more secure which correlated to less interpersonal problems. During the course of psychotherapy, the patients gained tools to handle their problems and their perceived self-centeredness changed, which increased the participation in the life context. The therapy methods and the cooperation with therapist made up a whole. An essential part of the therapeutic work is to build up confidence in the cooperation and to shape interventions according to the needs of the patients and their ability to use them.