

## ABSTRACT

This study examined how clients, seeking individual, private Gestalt therapy, choose therapists from their experiences of initial meetings. A qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach was used and data was collected, by means of long interviews, from 5 clients with experience of one or more initial meetings. Findings show that clients choose their Gestalt therapists by using their contact functions and feelings to gather information from the field of the meeting - various aspects of therapists and their environment - and thus form perceptions of therapists' abilities to meet their needs and expectations. It also became apparent that, on some occasions, the external factor of recommendations influenced their choice process. Recommendations; therapist personal/professional qualities and the therapeutic space emerged as major themes important to all in the choice process. The relevance of this study to Gestalt therapy theory and practice and suggestions for further research are discussed.