

## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the participants' subjective experience of being the recipient of projective identifications within their family of origin and on their experience of Gestalt psychotherapy in working through issues directly engendered by this phenomenon. Essentially, the relationship between the theoretical concept of projective identification and the lived experience has been explored. The area of family projective identification is a theoretical concept that has been overlooked in Gestalt psychotherapy research and practice. In the main, existing literature and previous empirical research on this topic has been based in object relations and psychodynamic theories. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach. Semi-structured interviews with four Gestalt psychotherapy clients were tape recorded and then transcribed. The following major themes emerged from the data analysis: confusion and feeling bad; longevity of experience; impact on adult relationships; the intervention with no name. Limitations and implications of the findings are discussed; in particular, suggestions are made as to how projective identification might be further incorporated into Gestalt psychotherapy and how further research in this area would be useful.