

ABSTRACT

This study explores somatisation and its potential links with childhood sexual abuse. The exploration was undertaken using a phenomenological method of research. Relevant literature on somatisation and childhood sexual abuse was reviewed. Semi-structured interviews with the research participants generated data, which was analysed using a phenomenological approach. The data was organised into a table of themes with sub-themes of the participants' subjective experiences of somatisation that they have linked to their childhood sexual abuse. The themes were integrated into '... a single exhaustive description' (McLeod, 2001; 41). The findings were compared to the literature reviewed, and their implications for Gestalt psychotherapy theory and practice were considered. A critical evaluation of the study was presented and areas for possible future research were suggested.