

## Abstract

Gestalt therapy is a therapy that engenders creative working on the part of the therapist, able to utilise a variety of techniques and approaches that serve to further the work with the client whilst maintaining the theoretical precepts of Gestalt therapy. The creative working of the therapist has been studied in the Gestalt literature. What is not available, however, is any study pertaining to the poetic expression brought into the therapy by the client. This research begins to address this gap by exploring how Gestalt therapists work with the poetic expression that the client brings to therapy. This study does not seek to define poetry or poetic expression, instead utilises the participants conceptualised notion of poetic expression. A total of nine experienced therapists were interviewed to explore this phenomenon. The literature review highlighted that many individuals have made use of poetry and poetic expression across a range of disciplines and as a therapeutic tool is recognised as valuable. A number of themes came out of this phenomenological research that highlighted the role and the importance of the therapist; the value in the therapist both listening and reading the expression - this reading might be the first time the client hears their own expression. The poetic expression was recognised as bringing to the 'here and now' the 'then and there' experience. The research has highlighted the need to attend to the client's poetic expression as an aspect of the Self. In this regard the poetic expression is expressing something from deep within the client and often is expressing the unexpressible; making the intangible tangible. From the outcome of the research is the possibility of a way of working with the poetic expression of the client. A potential way of working is presented.