

Abstract

The study explored the experience of a gestalt meeting and how gestalt therapists define themselves as Gestaltists. Three defining principles of gestalt therapy; field theory, phenomenology and existential dialogue were explored as a framework for understanding how Gestaltists define themselves, and gestalt literature reviewed.

A phenomenological method was used to explore how gestalt therapists experienced their first meeting with gestalt therapy and how they define themselves as Gestaltists now, after more than 10 years for practice. Data transcripts were analysed using McLeod's (2001) synthesis for data analysis. The findings provided support for the significance of relationship and contact in the gestalt experience and highlighted elements in a Gestaltists definition of self. Implications for practice suggested special attention to therapist self-support and integrating an embodied field.

Further research on the effects of the existential dialogue, ethical dilemmas in a dialogic relationship and working in an embodied way were suggested.