

Abstract

This qualitative, phenomenological, hermeneutic study explores the experience of belonging, identity and relationships in Third Culture Kids. Third Culture Kids are those who have grown up internationally, and spent time living in more than one country up until the age of 18. Data is captured via interviews with 8 Third Culture Kids, who are now adults, representing a diverse range of international backgrounds. This data is considered in the light of gestalt psychotherapy theory as well as in the context of current literature. The findings highlight the isolation and loneliness that can accompany the TCK's feelings of being different, and the creative adjustments made in order to establish belonging and avoid painful feelings. They emphasise the importance of strong family relationships to ensure healthy transition and personal growth. It illustrates the ways that TCK's are often missed, through projection and lack of attention to endings and separations. The study argues for greater awareness of TCK's amongst Gestalt therapists in order to work with them more effectively and respond better to their needs.