

Abstract

'Touching a human need' was a phenomenological exploration of female clients' experience of 'being held' in humanistic therapy by their female therapist. A sample of eight female co-researchers were interviewed. All co-researchers were trainee or qualified psychotherapists, who had volunteered to participate.

Findings demonstrated two experiential categories – '*wanted*' and '*unwanted*' holding - which were defined and examined in parallel, as each theme was described. These were presented in Figure 1 (Section IV :Findings) as a cyclical process incorporating five themes (listed below) which culminated in an exhaustive description:

1. The Experience
2. Beginnings
3. Factors Influencing the experience
4. Impact
5. Not Words

A baseline for ethical practice and a set of five guidelines for practitioners was presented. These resembled Geib's (1998) four therapeutic practices that influenced a client experiencing productive or counterproductive touch.