

Abstract

This is a heuristic study exploring how female clients with a borderline process experience the relationship with their Gestalt psychotherapist. It aimed to give voice to an experience, the client's perspective, which is currently unacknowledged within gestalt literature.

Gestalt theory related to borderline process is reviewed along with relevant literature and research in the wider field. Data was generated through informal interviews with four female clients, who identified themselves as having a borderline orientation, and analysed in line with heuristic methodology.

Individual depictions of each participant are presented along with a composite depiction and creative synthesis.

The findings are compared with the literature reviewed and the implications for Gestalt theory and practice discussed. Areas of convergence with existing theory are highlighted, such as the importance of a dialogic relationship characterised by therapist authenticity and presence. Areas where the need for further development of theory and practice is suggested by the findings are examined, for example how the therapist's personality traits may impact the co-created therapeutic field.

The limitations of the study are considered and possible future research suggested, such as how Gestalt therapists recognise and experience counter-transference when working with borderline process.