

Abstract

The experience of suffering from a life-threatening illness is complex, requiring the employment of different coping mechanisms to deal with both the physical symptoms and the psychological impact of a sudden threat to one's life.

Through an interpretative phenomenological analysis research design the experiences of four integrative psychotherapists were explored. Several varied coping mechanisms were identified which assisted the individual to manage the impact of the illness on the sense of self and confront the existential issues which arose as a result. Finally, participants focused on their therapeutic practice, discussing how they managed their practice, including the need, if any, for disclosure.