

Abstract

In a phenomenological study seven female participants were interviewed about their experience of being physically held by their female therapist in humanistic psychotherapy. The data was analysed using semi-structured interviews looking for themes and units of meaning. Findings indicated that being physically held met many developmental needs of the client, restoring a developmental process which had been interrupted, bringing about intrapsychic and interpersonal healing, integration and transformation. The study identified many ethical issues which have implications for the safe use of physical holding in psychotherapy.