

Abstract

The focus of this research was to investigate the phenomenon of the idealisation of parental figures and the subsequent disappointed ideal. The study explored the client's experience of having either entered therapy with an idealised image of their parents and upbringing, or an already disappointed idealisation, and the inherent affective responses that surround the loss of this perception.

The researcher aimed to develop an understanding of the idealisation phenomenon within an Integrative Psychotherapy framework; to gain further knowledge of developmental and relational needs inherent to the process. The objectives were to inform wider clinical practice to enable a more effective approach, whilst providing an indication of future directions for research. The research is of a qualitative paradigm and has employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as research method.

In summary this research has presented findings that hold new theoretical ideas and has found that the idealisation phenomena involves experiencing others as ideal, is an affective experience, a relational experience and has an impact on the sense of self. The theoretical concepts presented contribute to the understanding of idealisation phenomenon which could hold wider implications within the practice and training of psychotherapy; which would enable more effective treatment to clients who have experienced this phenomenon.