

Abstract

Although our language and culture perpetuate a dualistic, mind and body concept of the self which frequently seems to objectify the body, the significance of the body as the means by which we experience and understand the world is becoming apparent within the field of psychotherapy. Neuroscientific research and philosophy come together to further understanding of how people process and make sense of their experience in the world, and now offer psychotherapists new understanding of working at depth to bring the unconscious into awareness. Through reviewing the literature on the relevance of the body to psychotherapy and the ways in which psychotherapists can work with body awareness in the therapeutic space, then comparing this with material from interviews with clients about their experience of body awareness in an integrative psychotherapy, this study has sought insight into the value given to this phenomena by clients. A descriptive phenomenological method has been used to frame the research, providing a method sympathetic to the aims and subject of the study, producing a dense, textural description of the nature of client's experience. The resulting impression of the participants experience reflected the views expressed in the literature, few of which were based on research with clients, the themes of intrapsychic integration and affect regulation emerging from both as aspects of the experience valued by the participants and so of particular value for psychotherapists' learning as elements of the process of change for each individual become evident.