

## **Abstract**

The focus of this research was to explore therapists' lived experiences with seriously, physically ill clients that became ill during a period of time when they were undergoing therapy; the importance of self-awareness, consequences of unexamined physical emotion on patient care and their relational impact on the quality of their therapeutic relationship. A qualitative, phenomenological method was used; using data obtained from semi-structured interviews, 5 psychotherapists were interviewed about their own experiences of the presence of serious, physical illness in their clients. In an analysis of the interview transcripts, several categories of themes were identified: medical illness impact, grief/mourning, loss and bereavement, therapist trauma, somatisation, vicarious traumatisation (VT), vicarious resilience, countertransference, self-knowledge/self-awareness, and self-care. The findings additionally highlighted the wide range of feelings expressed and the differences and similarities found with other research findings. The research gives complete details of the experiences based on the analysis of the interviews.