

Abstract

This study focuses on therapists with an ambivalent attachment style, exploring how they experience and manage this within the therapeutic relationship. This feeling of push- pull, or connection and disconnection in the therapy room is captured with a heuristic study. Originating from the researchers own personal journey, the aim is to support the ambivalent therapist through their struggle and frustration to connect.

The qualitative study included a semi structured interview which focused on; the participants experience of their ambivalence, the participants experience of connecting and disconnecting with their clients, and how the participant manages their ambivalence in the therapeutic relationship. A journal exercise was also used.

There is a vast amount of attachment theory research, but the researcher found there was a significant gap in the field of relational psychotherapy when considering both the therapists attachment style and the impact on the therapeutic relationship.

The researcher hypothesises that the ambivalent therapist must work through their own insecure attachment issues, in the way the inconsistent care giver never did, by taking the risk of relationship in their own therapy and challenging their internal working model. Only then will they be able to achieve the connection the ambivalent so greatly desires, and consider themselves a good enough therapist.