

## **ABSTRACT**

*Aim:* This study explored female person centred therapists' experience of working with male client attraction.

*Method:* A small-scale qualitative research project was undertaken with three qualified therapists. Data was collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews, and an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis used for analysis of individual perception and experience.

*Findings:* None of the participants were able to give a person centred or humanistic theoretical rationale for their client's attraction. This highlighted the inadequacy of their training courses in covering the subject. The participants expressed feelings of responsibility for the attraction and questioned whether they had precipitated it. There was concern about the importance of dealing with attraction appropriately and how best this could be achieved. Supervisory support was seen to be crucial. The experience of working with attraction had impacted the participant's use of self in that the way they dressed had been affected and their interactions with male clients had undergone subtle change. A parallel was drawn between the responses of the participants and the responses of female victims of sexual assault.

*Implications/conclusion:* The importance for person centred therapists to acknowledge a lack of clarity or discussion around the area of sexual attraction is noted. There was also recognition that better access to training, and not being reliant on courses taught from a psychoanalytical perspective would be important for future person centred training courses. The importance of therapists (particularly those working with female victims of sexual abuse) exploring their own potentially gendered attitudes to sexual responsibility was highlighted.