

Abstract

This research was a phenomenological inquiry into how person-centred therapists perceptions of their obese clients impact their capacity to offer unconditional positive-regard (UPR). Using a Duquesne method, three participants, who were working therapeutically in a person-centred setting with clients who they perceived to be obese, were interviewed. The structured interviews challenged participants to consider and confront their own biases and attitudes towards obesity, with many of them questioning the consistency of their UPR in practice. Four themes emerged from the data: perception of obesity, relating to the physicality of the client, positive regard and self-awareness & incongruity. In the discussion, the four main themes of the findings were compared and critique with relevant literature. The overall sense of the study is not to prove a single, valid truth, but to create questions and curiosity around the subject and ultimately to encourage a deeper and more open-minded reflection and consideration of the implications of what obesity means to the therapist, our practice and our clients.