

Abstract

Deflection is everywhere. Every day, everyone we come into contact with, including ourselves deflect eye contact, compliments, offered help, feelings, enquiry and possibly most powerfully, relationship.

Identified as an interruption or modification to contact in Gestalt theory (Mann 2010, p.41); referred to as a defence mechanism in Psychodynamic theory (Longhofer 2015, p.53) and comparable in Person-centred theory with the distortion and denial of experience (Bower 2001, p.90) as a result of conditions of worth on the actualising tendency (Rogers 1959); deflection can be both a help and a hindrance and might even be considered an intrapsychic and interpersonally accepted norm.

Supported by a rationale for practice, a review of literature on the topic and a case study of a client who has a deflective process; I hope to understand more about the behaviour of, and how to work with deflection within the therapeutic relationship to achieve relational depth (Knox et al., 2013, p.41) whilst ensuring and maintaining client beneficence (BACP 2013, p.2), ethical practice and quality of contact.

(169)