

## Abstract

This study explored three psychotherapists experience of working with those clients that have committed serious sexual offences. All three psychotherapists were either United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapists (UKCP) or working towards UKCP accreditation and regarded themselves as integrative. They were interviewed using a semi-structured format. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The study interpreted four superordinate and twelve subordinate themes, which included: (1) Their views before working with this client group: (1.1) *couldn't understand why somebody would commit those kinds of crimes*; (1.2) *can't work with them*. (2) Working with offenders and coping strategies: (2.1) *separating the behaviour from the person*; (2.2) *seeing the clients as whole persons with histories*; (2.3) *bracketing*; (2.4) *noting the importance of their work*; (2.5) *the importance of support*. (3) Working with offenders and the negative consequences: (3.1) *hostility from the public*; (3.2) *heightened awareness of danger*; (3.3) *vicarious traumatization*. (4) Changing views (4.1) *positive learning from working with this client group*; (4.2) *more positive views about working with this client group in the future*. It found that the psychotherapists' views had changed for the positive over their time working with sexual offenders. The limitation of this research is the small sample size that was not randomly selected and therefore it cannot generalise to a wider population of integrative psychotherapists.