

Abstract

This heuristic research was designed to inquire into what impact, if any, integrative psychotherapy had for clients who experienced depersonalisation/derealisation. At the time of writing treatment in the UK consisted of CBT and medication e.g. antidepressants, with only one specialist treatment centre at The Maudsley Hospital, London.

Five participants were recruited who were either integrative psychotherapists or trainees. They were required to have experienced both depersonalisation/derealisation and integrative psychotherapy as personal therapy. By conducting semi-structured interviews, data was gathered about the participant's experience of both depersonalisation/derealisation and integrative psychotherapy.

Findings demonstrated that four of the five participants felt that integrative psychotherapy had had a positive impact on their experience of depersonalisation/derealisation and reduced their need to rely on this primitive defence mechanism. This research demonstrated that where the therapist had used the dyadic relationship to regulate affect, accepted, validated and created a safe environment most clients were able to form a secure therapeutic attachment. This increase in the capacity to form an inter-relational connection led to improved intrapsychic integration.