

Abstract

This qualitative, heuristic study aimed to explore the experience of transitional objects for clients with an avoidant character style and consider whether this proffered a potential bridge to external-relationships.

Using semi-structured interviews, four integrative psychotherapists/trainees who identified with an avoidant style were interviewed regarding their transitional object use. Data analysis was undertaken, producing a range of findings that were discussed in the context of existing literature.

The research highlighted how the avoidant client is ruled by fear, and in defending against this they become trapped in transitional-space. Transitional-object use emerged which was hidden but had deep personal meaning linked to self-other relatedness, capable of sensitive and attuned exploration in the therapeutic-dyad thereby offering a bridge to the external-world.

The findings are relevant to therapists, trainees, trainers and supervisors working with this client group. Areas for further research are identified to embed a deeper understanding of transitional-relatedness in the client with an avoidant character style.