

ABSTRACT

In a phenomenological study five Participants were interviewed about their experiences of being physically held in therapeutic situations. Findings indicated that physical holding had a positive impact when it constituted a different and more nourishing response, in the present, than that which occurred historically in similar situations. Conversely, physical holding had a negative impact when it repeated the adverse environmental conditions which were familiar in the client's past. Positive experiences deepened the therapeutic relationship and often heightened Participants' transference projections. The study identified several factors which have implications for the ethical and professional use of physical holding.