

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a preliminary small-scale investigation of GP trainees' attitudes towards, and experience of patients with emotional/behavioural/mental health problems and also considers the potential impact of these attitudes on the therapeutic frame within which patients are "contained."

Trainees were asked to respond to a questionnaire eliciting their confidence levels in this field of health care, and also their experience of these patient groups.

The trainees were also invited to give reflective responses to a small set of "patient" case histories. Within a limited set of responses, a majority of the trainees preferred to write in expert practitioner mode. A small number with experience of personal therapy wrote reflectively. Although this small group acknowledged, in some instances, low confidence levels, their comments on the "patient" material were more empathetic and showed a greater understanding of interpersonal dynamics.

The outcomes of the research are a further proposal that the training of doctors should include personal developmental and supportive therapy to heighten the doctors' awareness of relationship dynamics for their own benefit and that of their patients. A second important aim of this proposal would be to foster the notion of the doctor as a reflective, good-enough practitioner.