

ABSTRACT

The Gestalt theory of organismic self-regulation assumes that we know what we need and are responsible for contacting the environment in order to have these needs met. This study explores clients' experiences of being asked the question 'What do you need?' within a therapeutic context. Eight Gestalt trainees participated in focus group discussions and individual interviews. A grounded theory analysis generated a theory which highlighted the central position of need within a constellation of factors, namely shame, power, language, developmental issues, therapy experiences and not knowing what was 'on the menu'. All of these factors were found to be related to each other and subject to change over time. The clinical implications of this were explored, together with suggestions for further research.