



Attachment Theory and Self Awareness in the Counsellor

Place2Be Volunteer Counsellor Training

Participant Reading 4 – Self-Awareness & the Counsellor’s Inner Voice

Definitions

In humanistic terms *congruence*, *self-awareness* and *deepening empathy* refer to the process of being attuned to the non-verbal communications present in the room, listening carefully to your inner voice and taking these thoughts, feelings and experiences to supervision to enhance the therapeutic work.

In psychoanalytic terms *transference* refers to the unconscious redirection of a client's feelings from a significant person to a therapist, while *counter-transference* is the redirection of a therapist's feelings toward a client.¹

Significance

No matter what your theoretical orientation, being attuned and self-aware in sessions is important in order to regulate your emotions in the therapeutic relationship, as well as gain insight into what the child is attempting to elicit in you.

By taking your observations to supervision you can become more aware of what is happening in the work with the child. Talking about your thoughts, feelings and experiences of child therapeutic work in supervision is one way in which you can begin to unravel the complexities of sessions, build a picture of the child's world, and make sure you are keeping the work safe.

Below are some questions to ask yourself in order to keep these issues in mind when thinking about the children you are working with:

How do I behave/respond in relation to this child?

What do I feel in relation to this child?

What do I think when I work with this child?

What goes on inside for me?

What is the nature of my empathy with this child?

Are there any blocks to my empathy or responses with this child?

Am I experiencing any boundary problems with this child?²

¹ Youell, B., 2006. *The Learning Relationship: Psychoanalytic Thinking in Education*. London: Karnac Books.

² Taken from Mearns, D., 1997. *Person-Centred Counselling Training*. London: Sage.

