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Possibilities and challenges of psychodynamic therapy in a South African community setting

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Abstract

The increased interest in the application of psychodynamic ideas in community contexts is notable. This research aims to add to the expanding literature by exploring the subjective experience of therapists who practice in this setting. Six therapists who identified themselves as having a psychodynamic orientation, had worked in some capacity in this community context for over three years, and who were willing to participate were selected. They then undertook semi-structured interviews which were later transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. Inductive analysis of the data produced several themes. These included the context and the application of theory, the experience of the interviewer during the research, the internalisation of voices that guided practice, effects on the frame, as well as the participant's experience of otherness. The analysis allowed for an insight into the internal struggle and the grappling with ideas that require a therapist to be able to think about their own experiences and actions in the application of their work. The interviews highlighted the importance of adjusting ones work to the context, the individual internalisation of theoretical voices, the internal creation of a frame as well as a therapists struggle with otherness. The restricted scope of the research is acknowledged as the sample size and sampling area were limited. Future research is recommended to include a broader scope as well as investigate the dynamics of how theory is internalised and made personal**.**