

Abstract

South Africa is synonymous with cultural diversity. This diversity also presents in supervisors' work with supervisees, permeating the work between the therapist and the patient. This research was structured qualitatively to investigate novice therapists' experiences of working with culture and diversity in psychotherapy supervision. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with psychologists who were doing either their internship, community service, or in independent practice for not more than three years. Transcribed interviews were analyzed using Thematic Analysis (TA). From the results, four themes were identified and subsequently discussed: positive and negative experiences of psychotherapy supervision; experiences of racial similarity and differences in the supervision relationship; navigating diversity in the supervision of clients; and reflections on the interview process.

Findings suggest that although supervisees find it difficult to broach discussions on the influence of culture and diversity in the supervisor-supervisee and therapist-client dyads, they found engaging in such discussions important for helpful supervision relationships and for understanding patients in more depth. They attributed the difficulty in broaching to the supervisor-supervisee power dynamic, while also associating it with unclear expectations regarding whose role it is to bring up such conversations in supervision. The study indicates it would be helpful for supervisors to consider how intentional negotiation of culture and diversity may be used to enhance both the supervision relationship and the supervisees' work with their patients.

Keywords: *South Africa; culture; diversity; supervision; psychotherapy*