

Dare to Be Human: Self-Disclosure of Gay Therapists in Dynamic Therapy - Implications and Meaning

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This study explores a contemporary therapeutic issue – self-disclosure in dynamic therapy, specifically among gay therapists. The study examines how therapists perceive and experience therapeutic self-disclosure in generally, and particularly in relation to their sexual identity, in attempt to illuminate the theoretical and practical implications of self-disclosure in therapy. Ten respondents were interviewed for the study, using a qualitative-narrative methodology - all gay dynamic therapists, interviewed in semi-structured in-depth interviews.

The results indicate that self-disclosure in general and disclosure of sexual identity in particular, is not a single occurrence but an ongoing dynamic process of wide meanings. Self-disclosure is formed by dynamic structuring that is the subject of a continuous dialectical dialog of constructing and reconstructing various dialectical tensions. The data analysis has outlined four possible dialectical themes, which along with the therapeutic structuring produce "a Dialectic Matrix", featuring a multi-dimensional therapeutic space. This platform is formed by a dialogue between four main structuring - personal, interpersonal, social and professional – each contain a dialectical tension between four themes: objectivity vs. subjectivity as a super-theme, restraint vs. expressivity, similarity vs. difference, and real relationships vs. transference relationships.

The main conclusion is that loyalty to the distant professional tradition, in which the therapist is an object (a blank screen) to the patient's projections, preserves relations in which the patient himself lacks the freedom to grow as a subject. Alternatively, the movement of the therapist towards a personal position, freeing his own subjectivity, enables the growth of the patient as a subject in the therapeutic intersubjective dialogue. The unique contribution of this study is the idea that therapists cope with the need to re-examine various structuring in relation to the therapeutic dialogue, first and foremost, as a human dialogue between two subjects. The discussion advances the concept that the respondents maintain the tension between the convenience and the habit to remain a professional object and the desire and the fear of being human.

Key words: Self-Disclosure, Dynamic Therapy, sexual orientation, sexual identity, homosexuality, Dialectic Matrix

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