

The suicide of a client: an intern psychologist's experience

by

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of**

MAGISTER ARTUIM

in

Clinical Psychology

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Humanities

University of Pretoria

Supervisor: Mr. L. Daws

July 2003

Dedication

To the God I believe in

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank:

Mr. L. Daws, my supervisor

- For his guidance and thoughts

The intern

- For your honesty and openness about your experiences

Asheley Lotter

- For your practical and most of all emotional support during this study

My parents

- For your benevolent support

My colleagues

- For your thoughts and input

Jessica Louwrens

- For your technical support

The National Research Foundation (NRF)

- For their financial support

Abstract

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MAGISTER ARTIUM (CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY)

In this dissertation the author provides an account of the emotional experience of one clinical psychology intern whose client had committed suicide. This study describes the impact on the intern both as an individual and as a professional in the field of psychology. The impact on the intern as an individual is studied in terms of the coping mechanisms used as well as the changes that occurred in her views of death and suicide. The impact on the intern as a professional is studied in terms of her interactions with patients, how she addresses the topic of suicide within therapy, and the eventual changes that she experienced as therapist.

The study uses a single case qualitative research design. It concerns the experiences of a specific intern clinical psychologist within the context of a multidisciplinary academic hospital setting. The study is predominantly descriptive in nature, and as such employs the phenomenological method of Giorgi (1985) to provide a specific description of the experiences of the intern psychologist.

Through this, the study aims to add to the limited descriptive and qualitative information available on the experiences of therapists whose clients commit suicide. The information available on this topic is mostly quantitative in nature, providing statistical data on the emotions and experiences of therapists. The description of the experiences is also compared to the existing information on the topic.

As the aim of this study is descriptive in nature, it will not provide any fixed theory on the subject. It does illustrate the experiences of one intern and actively studies the correlation of these experiences with existing data. Conclusions drawn at the end of this study are purely speculative in nature and their validity is left to judge for readers to judge for themselves.

KEY WORDS:

Loss

Clinical psychology intern

Suicide

Death

Professional Psychologist

Qualitative research

Multidisciplinary team

Phenomenological method

Psychoanalysis

Psychotherapy

Samevatting

Die selfmoord van 'n klient: 'n intern sielkundige se ondervinding

deur

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Voorgelê ter vervulling van 'n deel van die vereistes vir die graad

MAGISTER ARTIUM (KLINIESE SELKUNDE)

In hierdie verhandeling voorsien die skrywer 'n verslag van die emosionele ondervinding van een kliniese sielkunde intern wie se klient selfmoord gepleeg het. Hierdie studie beskryf die impak op die intern beide as 'n individu en as professioneel in die veld van sielkunde. Die impak op die intern as individu word bestudeer in terme van die hanteringsmeganismes wat gebruik is sowel as die verandering wat plaasgevind het in haar uitkyk betreffende die dood en selfmoord. Die impak op die intern as professioneel word bestudeer in terme van haar interaksies met patiente, die aanraak van die onderwerp van selfmoord in terapie en die uiteindelijke veranderinge wat binne haar plaasgevind het as terapeut.

Die studie bestaan uit 'n enkel geval kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp. Dit het te make met die ondervindinge van 'n spesifieke kliniese sielkunde intern, binne die konteks van 'n multidisplinêre akademiese hospitaal. Die studie mik om primêr beskrywend van aard te wees en gebruik sodoende die fenomenologiese metode van Giorgi (1985) om 'n spesifieke beskrywing van die ondervindinge van die sielkunde intern te lewer.

Hierdeur mik die studie om by te dra tot die beperkte beskrywende en kwalitatiewe navorsing wat bestaan oor die ondervindinge van terapeute wie se kliente selfmoord pleeg. Die informasie wat beskikbaar is op hierdie onderwerp is meestal kwantitatief van aard en voorsien statistiese data oor die emosies en ondervindinge van terapeute. Die beskrywing van ondervindinge word ook vergelyk met bestaande informasie oor die onderwerp.

Die doel van hierdie studie is beskrywend van aard. Dus sal dit nie enige vaste teorie oor die onderwerp voorsien nie. Dit illustreer die ondervindinge van een intern en bestudeer die ooreenstemming wat hierdie ondervindinge het met bestaande data. Gevolgtrekkings wat getrek word aan die einde van hierdie studie is dus suiwer spekulatief van aard and die leser word gelaat om self te besluit oor hul geldigheid.

SLEUTELWOORDE:

Verlies

Kliniese sielkunde intern

Selfmoord

Dood

Professionele sielkundige

Kwalitatiewe navorsing

Multidisplinêre span

Fenomenologiese metode

Psigoanalise

Psigoterapie

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