
ABSTRACT

Supporting dialectical interaction of autonomy and relatedness and the differentiation of self: A case study of a client with interpersonal sensitivity

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Autonomy and relatedness are both essential needs for human beings. These two needs interact dialectically and this process promotes differentiation of self with the integration of the two aspects. With this perspective, it is critical for a therapist to support both the autonomy and relatedness of clients, and then, promote their processes of self-differentiation. Assertive relationships or involvement would be the key concept to achieve this purpose. This case study examined the psychotherapy process of a client diagnosed with bipolar disorder with high interpersonal sensitivity. The course of therapeutic interviews, which lasted approximately four years and was divided into seven phases, was described. The interview process was examined by focusing on the synchronous development of the client and his daughter, and by the self-differentiation and construction of a new relational narrative of the self by supporting autonomy and relatedness. The dialectic interactions of autonomy and relatedness and differentiation of self as the consequence of their integration would be important elements in both clinical practices and all human development.

Key Words: autonomy, relatedness, dialectical interaction, differentiation of self, self-assertion
