
Abstract

The dilemmas caused by a therapist's serious physical illness and their impact on psychoanalytic psychotherapy

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This study examined the specific details of dilemmas arising from a therapist's serious physical illness. Additionally, this study examined emotions the therapist experienced while making decisions regarding those dilemmas as well as their effects on the course of a client's psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Client A's therapy was temporarily interrupted because of the therapist's serious physical illness. The therapist experienced dilemmas related to self-disclosure and timing of her return to work. Amidst these dilemmas, the therapist decided to use the term "sudden illness" and not to extend her sick leave. Consequently, the therapist experienced regret, guilt, and helplessness. These feelings caused her to be skeptical of A's positive changes. The therapist was also less likely to discuss her "sudden illness" with A. However, the distress and suffering the therapist experienced due to the dilemmas themselves may have led her to express gratitude to A, thereby facilitating A's growth. Dilemmas caused by a therapist's serious physical illness may impact psychoanalytic psychotherapy in complex ways. The possible complications arising during that process need to continue to be carefully reflected upon and considered.

Keywords: therapist's illness, serious physical illness, dilemma, psychoanalytic psychotherapy
