

# Exploring Positive Countertransference in Psychotherapy with Psychotic Patients

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## Abstract

The paper explores the origins, processes and consequences of positive countertransference in psychotherapy with psychotic patients. Firstly, the role of countertransference in general (positive or negative) in psychotherapy with psychotic patients is discussed in terms of the profound effect such countertransference responses can have upon both therapist and patient. The specific influence of positive countertransference upon the patient as well as upon the therapeutic process is then examined in more detail. This includes the constructive influences of positive countertransferences on the containing function of therapy, the 'real' therapeutic relationship, and the working alliance. The potentially detrimental influences of such countertransferences are also examined. The paper examines the specific nature and determinants of positive countertransference with psychotic patients, including responses to the patient's intense need for the psychotherapist, the patient's containing the therapist's wounded self, the patient's profound connection to the therapist, and the therapist's experience of inhibition reduction. The need for the therapist to retain awareness of these positive countertransferences and how they may affect the therapist, the patient and the therapy is emphasized.