

The masculinity of male psychotherapists: Towards reflexive praxis

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Abstract

This article is an attempt to engage questions around how psychotherapists are positioned as gendered beings within psychoanalytic praxis, and more specifically, how male psychotherapists experience their masculinity within the therapeutic encounter. To this end, the deliberations stemming from a focus group process are offered to illustrate the impossibility and potential pitfalls of approaching the therapeutic hour without an awareness or appreciation of gender. An interpretive thematic analysis of the group discussion and process yielded the following preoccupations among participants in the constitution of their masculinities, namely: a difficulty defining masculinity; masculinity as socially constructed; a 'disidentification' from the feminine; a foregrounding of issues of hegemony and dominance, and; the intimate relationship between gender and desire. With reference to the group discussion and from a perspective that appreciates that the place of gender and the position of the therapist require ongoing theorization within psychoanalytic praxis, the importance of nurturing a reflexive stance is emphasized.