

Transference and Countertransference in Long-Term Psychotherapy: A Clinical Case Study of Panic-Like Symptoms

Nikolina Vidov

Independent Researcher, Psychologist, Integrative Psychotherapy, Trainee, Croatia

Abstract:

Transference and countertransference are central relational processes in psychotherapy and can provide valuable insight into the emotional dynamics underlying anxiety disorders. This paper presents a clinical case study of a female client who entered integrative psychotherapy due to recurrent episodes of intense anxiety accompanied by somatic sensations resembling panic attacks. The aim of the study is to explore how transference patterns emerged within the therapeutic relationship and how the therapist's countertransference responses contributed to understanding the client's psychological difficulties. In the early phase of therapy, the client reported persistent anxiety, fear of losing control, and heightened sensitivity to interpersonal stress, which were reflected in relational expectations and emotional reactions toward the therapist.

Throughout the long-term psychotherapeutic process, the exploration of these relational dynamics enabled a deeper understanding of the client's internal relational patterns. Moments of transference were expressed through fear of abandonment, sensitivity to perceived rejection, and ambivalence toward emotional closeness. The therapist's countertransference responses provided important information that guided therapeutic interventions and supported the development of a stable therapeutic relationship. Over time, the client developed greater emotional awareness and improved capacity to regulate anxiety, while the intensity and frequency of panic-like episodes gradually decreased. This case study highlights the clinical importance of understanding transference and countertransference processes in psychotherapy and their role in facilitating therapeutic change.

Keywords:

Transference, Countertransference, Case Study, Psychotherapy, Panic Symptoms.