7 WPI Research Assessment Criteria & Marking Document

Trainee name(s): John Dray Year: 2

Marker name: Marian Crowley Date:

	CRITERIA & COMMENTS	MARK
1	**Overview**: There needs to be a structured plan for the work with an introduction, development and conclusion. The work should address the learning outcomes. Your area of interest needs to be refined. I did feel a little challenged at times with some of your conclusions. You explain your motivation for your study and its structure and helpfully explain your terminology. I would suggest that the research question needs to be more refined prior to commencing the research. Equally you would need to be more explicit about your methodology.	6/10
2	**Structure**: The literature review demonstrates that trainees have read, understood and critically evaluated some research in relation to psychotherapy and have a working knowledge of research relevant to their modality and their own practice. Research methodologies are described clearly, are a good fit with the question being considered, and are effectively demonstrated in practice by any supporting materials provided. You needed to explore this area in more depth, part of the issue was that you didn't refine your research area sufficiently. You need to make your research aim/statement clear and more explicit. The work in parts lacks critical analysis and additional supportive literature. You need to limit the number of lists this tended to make the work somewhat descriptive. Be mindful of making assumptions which are not supported by relevant literature	12/30
3	**Effectiveness & Quality of Writing:** The trainees' application of appropriate research methodologies to psychotherapeutic practice demonstrates that they have knowledge and understanding of basic research approaches and techniques and how they apply to the investigation and evaluation of psychotherapeutic processes and outcomes. The work is well structured, themes / ideas / issues are identified and articulated in a logical and consistent way. I would have liked to have seen a bit more written in terms of qualitative methodology and why this is the most appropriate method in undertaking this research.	12/30
4	**Professionalism:** Awareness of empowerment, anti-oppressive practice, intersectionality and unconscious bias is clearly evidenced and reflected upon. Relevant research ethics are clearly explained and understood. You have explored the ethical considerations inherent in undertaking this type of study, in parts you could have expanded and supported these with relevant literature especially related the ethical principles.	7/15
5	**Research & References:** Appropriate structure, referencing and written style throughout. Accuracy of references and quotations, use of Harvard System. You have included appropriate literature to support your discussion although this could have been explored in more depth. Some the references utilised were outdated you need to expand of why this was utilised to support the discussion. The proposal needed	5 /10

	to be supported by more literature in parts you tended to make a number of generalisations unsupported by literature.	
6	**Style & Presentation:** Assignments are to be typed and double spaced with pages numbered and named. Front sheets must be included. Marking will take into account spelling, grammar and adherence to word limit (+/- 10%) unless special dispensation has been agreed. **Note:** *5 marks to be automatically credited for those writing in a 2nd language or with recognised learning needs.* This is a well presented piece of work, more structure to the proposal is needed.	5/5
	MARK	**47/100**
	GRADE	refer

Up to 49% = Refer; 50% - 59% = PASS; 60% - 79% = Merit; 80% + = Distinction

First Marker - General Comments
This is a very interesting and relevant area of study that would be important for other trainees to read as to the impact of training etc. I would suggest that the research question needs to be more refined prior to commencing the research. Equally you would need to be more explicit as to the data collection process inherent in the research.

1st Marker signature	
Date	

2nd Marker Comments

Mark and grade agreed. I feel you are exploring some interesting questions which need however to be more focussed and grounded. My sense is of the work being distracted into numerous side issues so that the sense of direction and momentum is dissipated. There is much here that can be re-worked and resubmitted with a stronger core focus.

2nd Marker signature	
Date	**7.09.24.**

GRADE AGREED: YES / NO

John Dray

Assignment 2 (Year 2 trainees only) Research Proposal

A research proposal of 2,500-3,000 words that:

- Identifies an appropriate area for study and research question by means of literature review
- Details the proposed methodology for carrying out the research and produces supporting materials (eg semi-structured interview questions, consent forms)
- Includes an analysis of ethical considerations
- Provides an analysis of the potential problems, challenges and benefits to the profession of the research study

  Option to complete full research project

This is a valuable learning exercise with the aim of stimulating you to engage yourself as a practitioner researcher in a subject that has relevance to psychotherapy. WPI encourages those students interested in developing their research interests for dissemination at conferences and in publications and can provide support with this. Approval for this will need to be sought from course leader in the context of other work and course requirements and the nature of the research to be carried out. Please let WPI know as soon as possible if this is an option you know or think you might be interested in pursuing.

Submission Tuesday 21st May 2024

John Dray

Fantasies of Drag: Why do therapists dress the way they do?

Abstract

In preparing to become a psychotherapist, I found that much work is done on fostering the therapeutic relationship: noticing what is going on for me and the client, developing a ‘safe container’, having the room decorated correctly, and so on need to reference. For most of the session I will be looking at the client and the client will be looking at me. If it is important that the room is decorated correctly, then surely it is important how I choose to decorate myself. How I will present myself is giving me some way of giving away something of who I am. This was scuppered when a placement required that I dress ‘smart casual’. What if ‘smart casual’ is not who I am, who would I be in the therapy room?

Through this research proposal, I hope to have the opportunity to explore the considerations that new therapists put into how they choose to present themselves because? Not sure what you mean by this?. Throughout the work, I will typically use the term ‘dress’ to include attire, body modifications, cosmetics and supplements to the body, as defined in Roach-Higgins & Eicher (1995, p. 1). Through the use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) I will explore the narratives and themes of the interviewees. This will produce a resource that I can use to consider my dress within the therapy room. I am hoping that it could similarly be a resource for those who are starting to see clients and wish to make the experience positive for them and their clients.

Introduction

In preparing to become a psychotherapist, much work is done on fostering the therapeutic relationship, developing a ‘safe container’, having the room decorated correctly a bit of a generalisation. That said, there was little discussion about what is worn in the therapy room. I was set to thinking about this when a placement required me to dress ‘smart casual’. How would what I wore affect me and my clients? I discussed this with colleagues who wore certain items of clothing for protection (e.g. around neck and solar plexus), who deliberately chose neutral tones so as not to bring too much of ‘them’ in the room, who did not wear wedding bands for fear of giving away too much about their life outside of therapy[1]. The effect of therapist attire even became a significant theme in a therapy practise session.

I was intrigued by the notion that what I wore could have a huge impact on the development of the therapeutic session what is your evidence to support this?. The modalities of psychotherapy learned at the Welsh Psychotherapy Institute (WPI) are all relational. This suggests that, in using these modalities, I should bring something of myself into the therapy room. My inference is that my appearance should give an authentic, although not necessarily complete, impression of who I am. This gives the client an opportunity to relate to a real human being, rather than a false projection. Part of my decision to study through the WPI is that they emphasised that they were not trying to form generic therapists, but were trying to help us find the best individual ways of being a therapist that were unique to each of us. The experiential method of teaching was about the continual demonstration of the importance of boundaries, bracketing and experience to the therapeutic process.

[1] It is possible that someone seeing a finger with a ‘tan line’ where a ring is normally visible might be available for extra-marital/extra-relationship sexual relations, so this could have the reverse of the intended effect.

John Dray

In short, I want to explore what the neophyte psychotherapists believes that their dress brings to the phenomenology of the therapy room. Depending on the resulting themes, it may be relevant to compare this with the results of studies to explore whether these belief accord with the results of other research. This is not to validate or invalidate the beliefs, but to explore whether the existing research is looking at the factors that matter to psychotherapists and their therapeutic process.interesting area to explore

Literature Review

For me, there is a special poignancy as I come from a profession with a very distinctive set of religious uniforms and an important sense of vocation rationale. These allowed potential 'clients' to see a person in a role a long time before they saw 'me' within the clothing. In other words, the uniform was all about transference. So part of my motivation in undertaking this research is to find out how people choose to dress as they transition from their previous role to the role of becoming a psychotherapist. If, as the WPI asserts, they are trying to discover the psychotherapist within, then the external manifestation of this would suggest something akin to a 'revealed truth'. To my mind, this parallels the search for other inner truths, such as the discovery of our authentic selves, the discernment of vocation and authentic gender. For me this resonated with Butler (1988) and her phenomenological exploration of gender expand. I was assisted in understanding this through Thorn (2024). I was left wondering if gender 'performivity' has an analogue in the process of becoming a psychotherapist? In the introduction you were referring to dress etc this seems to be a different area of exploration

I believe that 'psychotherapist' is not a whole time expression of who we are, but is based on our presence within the therapeutic context. Rather than being similar to expression of gender, it is, perhaps, closer to the situational expression of self of a drag queen. Here a person is choosing to express a true (or false) image of their nature in a particular situation for a particular effect. Mattel (2018) explores this in their exploration of the history of drag. Throughout this work, I will typically use the term 'dress' to include attire, body modifications, cosmetics and supplements to the body, as defined in Roach-Higgins & Eicher (1995, p. 1).

I chose to have the word 'fantasies' in the title, as much of what the therapist chooses to wear in the therapy room is based on a 'fantasy' of the effect it will have on the client (as in Roll & Roll (1984) which is build on Strong (1968))dated literature, rather than a systemic study that includes asking the client. (Some therapists need to support with evidence will ask

the client how they see them and that this may include discussions of dress as part of an exploration of transference.generalisation) In this sense, for better or worse, it may help them to enter the role of psychotherapist. For bracketing, it may also help them leave the role of psychotherapist when they take off their ‘drag’ at the end of the working day.

In beginning to consider the impact of the physical appearance of the therapy room, I started by looking at Devlin et al. (2009). In this work they look at the impact of the number of certificates and family photos had on the perception of participants of the therapist qualities. This was a quantitative study of the impact, the participant were college students, many of whom had never been to see a therapist. This could give clues as to the impact of a first impression of the therapist’s office on a client. On the other hand, part of the client experience is going to the therapist’s office with a particular set of issues. The analysis did attempt to find if there was significant difference in the results from participants who had seen a therapist versus those who had not and concluded that this did not create a significant difference. A later study (Devlin, Nasar, & Cubukcu, 2014) explored the hypothesis that the culture of the students might affect their perception of the therapist’s office you need to have a more focused area of exploration. While, in general, they found that the properties of the office worked cross-culturally they acknowledged that the questionnaire they had prepared was Western in cultural origin and may have missed important areas of cultural difference. This could have had a negative impact on the results of the survey because?. To me this highlights a deficiency of using a quantitative analysis for this type of research. If the questionnaire has a bias that is only discovered after the research, then it is difficult to go back and repair the questionnaire or the research. A qualitative study gives the participants the opportunity to raise themes that the researcher has not initially included in the study. I find that one of the important points that Devlin et al. (2014, p. 965) raise is that the first impression is very important in the client’s decision to attend additional sessions. So the initial experience of the client is important in the decision

of the client to continue therapy with a particular therapist.it would be important to focus your search on your research area rather than exploring the therapists office

Moving to qualitative studies, there is the recent study by Petre (2024). In this study, he looks at the experiences of both psychotherapists and their clients in relation to ?. He compares this with recent qualitative studies and empirical studies going back to the 1950s. He uses Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse the qualitative data of his study.need to elaborate on the study this is to vague

Similarly, McDonald & Ma (2015) looks at how children are more likely to assess someone who is formally dressed as being more knowledgeable. It explores this in terms of the 'halo effect' described in Nisbett & Wilson (1977).not sure how this relates to your research area

Finally, this led me to the work of McCarthy (2017). Her work covers a similar area to my proposed research, but I would be able to build on the shortcomings she identifies in her work.It would be important to explore this study in more depth

Ethical Considerations

In looking at the ethical considerations of this research, I have taken into account guidelines from both the UKCP (*A Brief Guide to Research Ethics*, n.d.) and the BACP (*Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions*, 2018).

Anonymity

The interviews and other materials within this research proposal would be maintained confidentially. However, this may not be perfectly maintainable in research it is important to ensure this is carried out its part of the ethical principles, I would suggest you explore how you would do it in terms of the research outline. For instance, if a therapist revealed that they were wearing a hidden camera during their therapy sessions without the knowledge or consent of the client then this would be a clear breach of their professional ethical code. This would require reporting to their licensing body. Not sure how this relates to you exploring confidentiality within your own study

Another way in which confidentiality may be difficult to hold is if someone wears a very specific item of clothing or body adornment that is unique to them, then by including such details in the analysis of the research their identity may be incidentally revealed all data is anonymised. Examples could be a specific item of clothing of religious significance, or a particular piece of jewellery or footwear.

Finally, to secure the data a process of pseudonymisation would take place in line with *Anonymisation, Pseudonymisation and Privacy Enhancing Technologies Guidance* (2022) not sure what your trying to say here

Accidental Revealing of Issues

While discussing this project, some people revealed that they liked to wear specific items as protection, particularly around the neck and solar plexus. However this worked, they found it

helped them protect themselves from taking home emotions raised by the client during the session anecdotal evidence not clear how this relates to ethics?. My inference is that for some people clothing chosen by the therapist can help them keep themselves safe from trauma and emotion generalisation. In turn, this may be linked to past traumas experienced by the therapist generalisation. Talking about this 'protection' could bring discussion of past trauma into the interview process. For this reason, there will be a 15 minute debrief after the interview. Information from the debrief will not be included in the research. For people needing further support, it is important to have resources that can be signposted.

Informed Consent

In order for participants to be included in the research, they need to be fully informed of the nature of the research being carried out, any associated risks, how data will be stored and used, their right to withdraw from the research. To assist with this there is a Participant Information Leaflet (Appendix A) and a Participant Consent Form (Appendix B).good

The debriefing session is not part of the interview process, so information gathered there cannot be used as part of the research.valid point but you already mentioned this

Payment

As the interview process takes a significant amount of time, it may be ethical to pay the participants for their time. As part of this proposal there should be a request for funding for payment. Paying participant causes its own ethical issues and is complex within the research process, its important to remember this is a small scale study

Methods

The primary method of data capture is through the use of semi-structured interviews. Appendix C lists proposed questions for the interview. As the interview supposed to last an hour, it may be advisable to do a ‘trial run’ interview to see if the questions can be reasonably answered in the allotted time.

The target group of interest is those who are new to practising psychotherapy need to clarify what you mean here?, where the worries about ‘how to be a psychotherapist’ may be uppermost in the mind generalisation. For this reason, the target group would be trainee therapists who have been practising up to two years. Initially, I would intend to recruit potential interviewees from the Welsh Psychotherapy Institute, where I am studying need to address the ethical implications . However, it would broaden the study if I included trainee psychotherapists from other establishments. This research bears much similarity to the work of McCarthy (2017). In reviewing her research, McCarthy noted that her samples did not include a balance of genders. There was an insufficient number of people identifying as male. In her analysis, she suggested that this may have affected the results. Her work was carried out in focus groups, where I would prefer to interview participants individually. Rather than using Thematic Analysis as the analytical methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2012), I think that the idiographic nature of one on one interviews suggests the use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The main components of IPA are summarised below based on Smith, Flowers, & Larkins (2022)

Key Components

1. **Phenomenology**: This philosophical approach focuses on studying the lived experiences of individuals from their own perspectives. It aims to describe phenomena as they are perceived, without preconceived notions or theories.

2. **Hermeneutics**: This aspect involves interpretation. In IPA, researchers interpret the meanings that participants attach to their experiences. This interpretive process acknowledges that the researcher's perspective also influences the analysis.
3. **Idiography**: This component emphasises the detailed examination of individual cases before making broader generalisations. IPA is particularly interested in the unique, individual experiences of participants.

Steps in IPA

1. **Data Collection**: Typically involves in-depth, semi-structured interviews, although diaries, focus groups, and other qualitative methods can also be used. The goal is to collect rich, detailed narratives from participants about their experiences.
2. **Transcription**: The interviews or other forms of data are transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and depth in the analysis.
3. **Initial Reading and Noting**: Researchers immerse themselves in the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts. They make initial notes on anything interesting or significant, including descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments.
4. **Developing Emergent Themes**: Researchers identify patterns and themes that emerge from the data. This involves reducing the volume of detail while maintaining the complexity of the data. Themes are often grouped and linked together.
5. **Searching for Connections Across Themes**: Researchers look for relationships between themes, grouping them into clusters. This may involve creating a thematic map to visualize these connections.
6. **Moving to the Next Case**: Each case is treated individually before any cross-case analysis is conducted. This idiographic approach ensures that the unique context of each participant's experience is respected.
7. **Looking for Patterns Across Cases**: Once individual cases have been analysed, researchers look for patterns and themes across the cases. This step involves both

convergences (similarities) and divergences (differences) in the experiences of different participants.

8. **Writing Up**: The final step is to write up the analysis, presenting a detailed and nuanced account of the findings. This often involves including verbatim extracts from the interviews to illustrate the themes and interpretations.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths:

- Provides deep insights into individual experiences.
- Combines descriptive and interpretive elements, offering a rich, nuanced understanding.
- Flexible and adaptable to various research questions and contexts.

Limitations:

- Time-consuming due to the detailed and thorough analysis required.
- Relies heavily on the skills and interpretive abilities of the researcher, which can introduce subjectivity.
- Results are not easily generalisable due to the focus on individual cases. Try not to include lists it makes the discussion more descriptive

In summary, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis is a robust qualitative methodology that offers profound insights into how individuals perceive and interpret their experiences, combining rigorous data collection and analysis with interpretive depth.

The interviews will be recorded digitally. This allows the interviewer freedom to not be taking notes during the interview.

Initial transcription of the interview will be through the app MacWhisper, which has the advantage that it performs the transcription locally, rather than sending information to ‘the

cloud', thus preserving confidentiality. These transcripts would then need to be edited so that it is clear who is speaking at each point.part of ethics section

Initial development of emergent themes within the transcript can be achieved using En Vivo or Qualcoder (a free alternative to En Vivo). This initial thematic analysis can use the principles of Thematic Analysis, as described in Braun & Clarke (2023) and Braun & Clarke (2012) not sure why your analysising via Braun and Clarke as opposed to Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, with the goal of initially keeping cases separate in line with IPA procedures.

In conclusion, I hope that the write up of the themes and narratives would give new psychotherapists food for thinking about how they present themselves in the consulting room with the result of a better process both for the client and the therapist.

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Appendix A - Participant Information Leaflet

Information

I am John Dray and I am currently undertaking a Post Graduate Diploma in Psychotherapy with the Welsh Psychotherapy Institute. As part of this, I am undertaking a research project and I am inviting you to take part. I am wanting to find out what choices psychotherapists make about the way they dress when meeting clients. I am looking for those currently undertaking psychotherapy training and, while on the training, are meeting clients.

What this entails

You are invited to take part, as you are a trainee psychotherapist who is meeting clients. Should you agree to take part the interview process will take an hour to complete. Following the interview, there will be a fifteen minute debrief. The interview will consist of three parts:

1. A question designed to measure your current attitudes to dress.
2. A semi-structured interview that will ask you about various considerations you make about dress before meeting clients.
3. A repeat of the initial question to find out if the interview process has changes your attitude to dress.

After completion of the interview, I may contact you by email if I have any questions to follow up.

Confidentiality

Data obtained from you will be pseudonymised (*Anonymisation, Pseudonymisation and Privacy Enhancing Technologies Guidance*, 2022). In other words, your personal details will be kept securely and will have an ID code on them. Your interview responses will be kept securely, separate from the personal details and will only be identified by the ID code. All

data will be kept in this manner and in the event that it is used for future research, will be handled in the same way. Audio recordings and trancripts will be made of the interview, but again these will be coded with the ID code and kept securely.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any point of the study and no negative inference will be made.

Declaration

I have read this consent form and have had time to consider whether to take part in this study. I understand that my participation is voluntary (it is my choice) and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without disadvantage. I agree to take part in this research. I understand that, as part of this research project, notes of my participation in the research will be made. I understand that my name will not be identified in any use of these records. I am voluntarily agreeing that any notes may be studied by the researcher for use in the research project and used in scientific publications.

Name of Participant (block letters): _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / _____ (DD/MM/YYYY)

If you have any questions regarding this, please contact my supervisor xxxxxxx

Appendix B - Participant Consent Form

Consent Form

Protocol Title: Fantasies of Drag: Why do therapists dress the way they do?

Please tick the appropriate answer.

I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Leaflet attached, and that I have had ample opportunity to ask questions all of which have been satisfactorily answered. Yes [ ] No [ ]

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time Yes [ ] No [ ]

I understand that my identity will remain confidential at all times. Yes [ ] No [ ]

I am aware of the potential risks of this research study. Yes [ ] No [ ]

I am aware that audio recordings will be made of sessions Yes [ ] No [ ]

I have been given a copy of the Information Leaflet and this Consent Form for my records. Yes [ ] No [ ]

Name of Participant (block letters): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / _____ (DD/MM/YYYY)

To be completed by the researcher or his nominee. I the undersigned, have taken the time to fully explained to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that he/she could understand. We have discussed the risks involved, and have invited him/her to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them.

John Dray

Signature: _____ (John Dray)

Date: ____ / ____ / _____ (DD/MM/YYYY)

Appendix C

Semi-stuctured interview

The recording device should be started.

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. We're interested in understanding the reasoning behind the dress you choose to wear in the therapy room. By 'dress', I will mean your attire, body modifications, cosmetics, and supplements to the body.

You are free to leave at any time. If you leave before the end of the interview, it may not be possible to include your answers in our research, but you will not be viewed negatively as a consequence.

It is possible that the survey will raise issues for you. If this is the case, let me know, and I will ensure that you receive support before you leave.

Your insights will be valuable for our research.

1. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 means 'not important' and 4 means 'very important'. How important to you is the way you dress as a psychotherapist?
2. Can you describe the typical attire you wear when conducting therapy sessions?
3. What factors influence your choice of attire for therapy sessions?
4. Do you believe that the attire you choose has an impact on the therapeutic relationship with your clients? If so, how?
5. Are there any cultural or professional norms that inform your decisions about what to wear during therapy sessions?
6. Have you received any formal training or guidance regarding appropriate attire for therapy sessions? If yes, can you elaborate on that?
7. Do you believe that your attire communicates anything specific to your clients? If yes, what messages do you think it conveys?

8. Have you ever had any feedback from clients about your attire? If yes, how did you respond to it?
9. How do you balance professionalism with personal comfort and authenticity when selecting your attire for therapy sessions?
10. Have there been any instances where you've felt unsure about what to wear for a therapy session? If so, what influenced your decision in those cases?
11. Do you think there are any misconceptions or stereotypes regarding therapist attire? If yes, what are they, and how do you address them in your practice?
12. How do you think the attire of a therapist might differ based on the type of therapy being practiced (e.g., psychoanalysis, cognitive-behavioral therapy, etc.)?
13. Are there any specific clothing items or accessories that you deliberately avoid wearing during therapy sessions? If yes, why?
14. How do you navigate any potential conflicts between your personal style preferences and professional expectations regarding attire in the therapy room?
15. Do you believe that there are any ethical considerations related to therapist attire that should be taken into account?
16. In your opinion, how important is the attire of a therapist in establishing trust and rapport with clients?
17. Do you dress differently for different clients? Does this impact the relationship?
18. Following this interview, On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 means 'not important' and 4 means 'very important'. How important to you is the way you dress as a psychotherapist?

The recording device should be stopped.

Debrief

Information from this part of the process is not to be included in the research. It should not be recorded.

John Dray

1. How did you find the interview process?
2. Has this raised any issues that you may need support with?