

THREE PERSPECTIVES ON CLIENTS' EXPERIENCES OF THE THERAPEUTIC ALLIANCE: A DISCOVERY-ORIENTED INVESTIGATION

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To deepen our understanding of the therapeutic alliance in conjoint treatment, we interviewed clients in four families about their individual, private experience of the alliance after an early session. These qualitative data were triangulated with family members' scores on Pinsof's Family Therapy Alliance Scale-Revised and observational ratings of their behavior on the System for Observing Family Therapy Alliances. This discovery-oriented investigation focused on three interrelated aspects of the alliance: the family's shared sense of purpose about the needs, goals, and value of therapy (i.e., within-system alliance), split alliances with the therapist, and felt sense of safety within the therapeutic context. Results were highly consistent across the three perspectives and congruent with idiographic, therapist-rated outcomes.