

Women Entering Clinical Psychology: Q-Sort Narratives of Career Attraction of Female Clinical Psychology Trainees in the UK

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Abstract: The great majority of the UK clinical psychology workforce are women, and this fact prompted an examination of the various ways clinical psychology might be seen as attractive to women—a neglected research topic. Female clinical psychology trainees from a variety of training programmes Q-sorted statements of potential job attractors. The process of analysis is outlined before most of the article is devoted to explicating the five narratives of attraction generated: making a difference, waiting for what I want, idealising challenge, identifying with distress and acknowledging power and privilege. Two super-ordinate 'stories' spanning the narratives are suggested—an over-riding attraction to the profession and a rebuttal of the suggestion that this attraction may be based on any overtly gendered grounds. In the absence of previous empirical data of women's attraction to clinical psychology, the small but significant contribution to understanding the profession made by the analysis is acknowledged—as is the need for further research to confirm and develop the findings. © 2011 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Author Keywords: Career Attractors; Clinical Psychology; Female Workforce Majority

Source title: Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy

Link: [Scopus Link](#)

Document Type: Article in Press

Source: Scopus

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