



JOSHA's Critical Review of "Gestalt Handling in the Treatment of Gender Violence: Rebuilding Self-Support and Awareness" by Erica Farias de Farias

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Submitted: 3. January 2025
Published: 14. April 2025
Volume: 12
Issue: 2
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Languages: English
Keywords: Gestalt therapy, gender-based violence, trauma recovery, intersectionality, self-awareness, empowerment
Categories: News and Views
DOI: 10.17160/josha.12.2.1027

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Abstract

This review explores the use of Gestalt therapy in addressing gender-based violence and trauma recovery. It highlights how Gestalt therapy fosters a safe, empowering space for survivors, helping them reconnect with their identities and emotional needs. The study emphasizes self-awareness, non-pathologizing approaches, and the importance of intersectionality in understanding violence. While insightful, the study's reliance on a single case and lack of methodological detail limits its generalizability. Expanding the sample size and incorporating quantitative data could strengthen future research.



The study by Erica Farias de Farias, guided by Lorena Schalken de Andrade, offers a valuable exploration of how Gestalt therapy can be applied to help individuals experiencing such trauma. The research focuses on increasing awareness and fostering self-support among patients, particularly women, who have experienced violence. The study is based on qualitative and descriptive methods, reflecting on clinical experiences at the Psychology School Clinic at the University of the Amazon. The findings suggest that Gestalt therapy's emphasis on the "here and now" provides a safe space for emotional and psychological reflection and transformation, allowing patients to rebuild their autonomy and self-sufficiency.

The study addresses a critical and highly relevant issue—gender-based violence and its psychological impact. This is an area where continued research is vital due to the ongoing prevalence of such violence worldwide. The study's focus on Gestalt therapy, an often underexplored approach in this context, is particularly significant, as it offers new insights into how therapeutic methods can aid in trauma recovery. By shedding light on the intersection of psychology and gender violence, the research contributes meaningfully to both academic and clinical discourse on trauma therapy and women's mental health.

The study highlights the importance of a therapeutic space that is both safe and empowering for women who have experienced violence. The clinical case discussed provides concrete insights into how Gestalt therapy can facilitate the reconnection of women with their personal identities and emotional needs, allowing them to regain self-support and resilience. Additionally, the exploration of gender-based violence from an intersectional perspective deepens the relevance of the research, acknowledging the multidimensional aspects of this social issue. The emphasis on self-awareness and the gradual deconstruction of crystallized beliefs offers a valuable therapeutic pathway for these vulnerable patients.

Another strength lies in the focus on individual subjectivity, central to Gestalt therapy, which fosters a non-pathologizing approach to the treatment of trauma. This is crucial in treating survivors of gender-based violence, as it reframes their experiences in a way that does not diminish their agency or autonomy. Furthermore, the study's inclusion of reflective and theoretical discussions adds depth to the understanding of how power dynamics and societal structures contribute to violence against women.



While the study makes a strong case for the use of Gestalt therapy in cases of gender-based violence, it lacks a more robust empirical basis. The study relies on a single case study, which, while insightful, limits the generalizability of the findings. Expanding the sample size to include more case studies would strengthen the conclusions drawn from the clinical experiences presented. Another limitation is the absence of clear methodological rigor in terms of data collection and analysis. Although the study is qualitative, more detailed descriptions of the methods used to analyze the patient's progress and the therapeutic interventions would provide greater clarity and credibility. The discussion around awareness and self-support is insightful, but a more systematic approach to measuring therapeutic outcomes would add scientific rigor to the research.

To address the limitations mentioned, the study could incorporate additional case studies to allow for comparative analysis, which would offer a broader view of how Gestalt therapy can be adapted for diverse cases of gender-based violence. Furthermore, integrating quantitative data, such as pre- and post-intervention assessments of psychological well-being or resilience, could provide a more comprehensive evaluation of the therapeutic outcomes. This would offer a clearer picture of how the therapeutic process directly impacts recovery from trauma.

Additionally, the study could benefit from a more explicit connection between the theoretical foundations of Gestalt therapy and the specific interventions used in therapy. Describing these interventions in greater detail and linking them more directly to the patients' progress would make the therapeutic process more transparent for both practitioners and researchers. Lastly, a more thorough discussion of the potential challenges of applying Gestalt therapy in cases of severe trauma would enrich the study. This could include insights into how therapists can navigate patient resistance or avoidance, which are common in trauma therapy, and how Gestalt techniques specifically address these barriers.

Overall, this study offers a valuable contribution to understanding the role of Gestalt therapy in addressing gender-based violence. It presents compelling arguments for how this therapeutic approach can restore autonomy, identity, and self-support in individuals affected by trauma. While the study is insightful, expanding the empirical basis and enhancing methodological rigor would strengthen its conclusions. By doing so, this research could serve as a more robust foundation for clinical applications and future studies in the field.



Acknowledgements

ChatGPT-4 January 24 version was used during the writing process on experimentation with new AI tools. However, the author of this review takes full responsibility for its content.

Article Information

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