

# Performing in Therapy: an aspect of clients' dissatisfaction in the premature termination of therapy

Christine Bonsmann, Peter Madsen Gubi  
& Andrew Reeves

**SUMMARY:** In order to inform and improve therapeutic practice this article describes a study aiming to understand clients' experiences of dissatisfaction which lead to the premature termination of therapy. The research is part of a wider study into participants' experiences of premature termination.

**KEY WORDS:** dissatisfaction; premature termination; client experience; counselling; psychotherapy

Clients' premature termination in counselling and psychotherapy occurs in approximately 20 per cent of cases, and clients report dissatisfaction as a key reason for dropout (Swift & Greenberg, 2015). Clients' experiences of dissatisfaction in the premature termination of therapy are under-researched, and little is known about indicators of dissatisfaction leading to unplanned endings from practitioners' perspectives. In our research semi-structured interviews were used to understand clients' experiences of dissatisfaction which lead to the premature termination of

---

Christine Bonsmann, DProf, is a BACP accredited and UKCP registered counsellor in Private Practice.

Peter Madsen Gubi, PhD, ThD, FRSA, FHEA, is Professor of Counselling at the University of Chester, UK; a BACP Senior Accredited Counsellor/ Psychotherapist and Supervisor; and an APSE Senior Accredited Pastoral Supervisor in Private Practice.

Andrew Reeves, PhD, FBACP, FHEA, is a Senior Lecturer in Counselling and Psychotherapy at the University of Chester, UK, researcher and author, and a BACP Senior Accredited Counsellor/ Psychotherapist.