



The Intimate Hour: Love and Sex in Psychotherapy

By Susan Baur

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What happens when a patient falls for her therapist - or a therapist is powerfully drawn to a client? Is it always a matter of abuse? In this provocative and timely study of intimacy in psychotherapy, both sides speak out for the first time, revealing the surprising spectrum of experience and feeling encountered when love slips into the therapy hour. Drawing on hundreds of instances of mutual attraction, Susan Baur shows that the stories to be told are rarely simple ones. They range instead from clear-cut cases of victimization to the grayer areas where those involved can be either lovestruck or truly in love. Firsthand accounts confirm that sexual attraction is common despite regulations to suppress it, and that fear of scandal has left those seeking help - counselors and clients alike - with nowhere to turn for advice. Together with stories of the famous liaisons of Carl Jung, Anton Mesmer, Otto Rank, and others, these accounts offer irrefutable evidence that attraction in therapy ta

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The Intimate Hour: Love and Sex in Psychotherapy By Susan Baur Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1385055 in Books
- Published on: 1997-01-08
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .0" h x .0" w x .0" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 309 pages



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Being prone to understatement, we will call this book controversial. The author, a clinical psychologist, asserts that the primary obligation of a therapist to a patient is to cure him or her; if this means initiating a love/sex liaison, so be it. Dr. Baur contends that an "ethical liaison" in the form of love between doctor and patient is the key to a positive therapeutic outcome.

From Publishers Weekly

Finding that the central role of intimacy between client and psychotherapist has been drastically diminished by narrow, legalistic regulations of the field, clinical psychologist Baur (*The Dinosaur Man; Confiding*) convincingly argues that more attention, rather than less, must be paid to the place of love in therapy. While unequivocally opposed to the sexual exploitation that so readily occurs in relationships marked by distinct differences in levels of authority (cleric/layperson and teacher/student relationships are also examined), Baur observes that the limitations imposed on practitioners today, while effectively limiting occasions of abuse, at the same time rigidly codify a process that is by nature fluid and individual. Furthermore, by casting clients as potential victims, these same formulations deny clients the principal role in their healing. Baur begins with a look at the history of sexual encounters in psychotherapy; she then examines the development of therapy and its regulation in the U.S. In the final section, "Why Can't We Talk About Love?" she looks at therapy's future, noting that the growing preponderance of women practitioners will reduce the amount of exploitation, which most commonly occurs between a male therapist and female client. Baur makes an eloquent plea for bringing the issues of love and sexual attraction squarely into the education of therapists, so that the central position of love—with its frequent companion, desire—is not slighted, but can be better understood and prepared for. Includes notes and an extensive bibliography.

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From Library Journal

When love and erotic encounters take place between psychotherapists and their patients, it has been politically correct to assume the therapist has taken advantage of an innocent client. Clinical psychologist Baur attempts here to explode what she considers a myth by presenting case studies that examine both sides of the issue and by acknowledging the relationship of love to therapy. Baur suggests that recent laws and regulations intended to protect patients from unethical therapists have fostered overly cautious and undemonstrative clinicians, resulting in loss of trust and affection-ingredients necessary for successful therapy. The history of sexual encounters in psychotherapy, the current situation, and why psychotherapists can't talk about love are the three major topics covered by Baur. Extensive notes are included for each chapter. This informative, readable book will be a useful addition to psychology collections in large public and academic libraries.

Elizabeth Goeters, DeKalb Coll. Lib., Dunwoody, Ga.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stacey Lawrence:

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Donald Labelle:

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