

Transference: Case Example

GRAINNE

Grainne attends counselling because she experiences difficulties in relating to people. Many years ago she had a long-term relationship with someone she was 'devoted' to, but he ended the relationship unexpectedly, which she found very painful. She says she has never really recovered from that. She finds it difficult to trust and has, as a consequence, experienced many short and unhappy intimate relationships with men. As a male therapist you are aware of this as a dynamic in the sessions, and you and Grainne have talked about these issues. In some ways, she says, you remind her of her first partner. You notice however, that Grainne is becoming increasingly flirtatious in sessions, changing how she dresses, asking more questions about you and, more recently, touching you on your arm as she leaves.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1 What might be the transference issues in this situation?
- 2 What do you understand by the term erotic transference?
- 3 What are the potential dangers here in this scenario?
- 4 How might you work with the transference, and how might you respond to Grainne?