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Introduction: The Effects of Psychotherapy on the Psychotherapist

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Introduction: The Effects of Psychotherapy on the Psychotherapist

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It is with great pleasure that I introduce this issue's series of articles on how providing therapy affects therapists. I have always been fascinated by the inner goings-on of therapists and clients, and much of my research has examined such phenomena. The opportunity, then, to invite therapists to reflect on how they are affected by providing therapy was exciting indeed. Therapists rightly examine how clients respond to therapy, how the work and interventions seem to be going. In addition, they also likely attend to how individual sessions, or clients, may affect them. Based on these authors' responses, however, they less often reflect on how their providing therapy to others affects *them*—as individuals, as partners, as parents—over the course of their lives. Barry Farber—whose 1978 doctoral dissertation was on this very topic—and I are honored that these authors opened themselves to this challenge, and thus to our readers as well. We think that you will find these papers thoughtful, provocative, and also quite moving.

The first articles (Meghan Butler, Emily Lyman) reflect doctoral students' perspectives on how providing therapy affects them. As those still very much engaged in the process of learning to be therapists, these students' words speak to the struggles and vulnerabilities that accompany tremendous growth and development. Nathan Pruitt then addresses both the student and the early career professional perspective as he examines the challenges and consequences of defining and implementing one's theoretical orientation as a therapist. Ladislav Timulak's

article follows, in which he speaks to how, as an emotion-focused therapist, he too is transformed by his clients' emotional transformations.

Jeff Hayes explores the "beneficial demands" of conducting therapy, demands that affect therapists both intra- and interpersonally. Jesse Geller's article examines the profound changes, both personal and professional, that arise over a lifetime of receiving, providing, and teaching others to do therapy. Finally, Laurie Heatherington, Micki Friedlander, and Gary Diamond explore how providing family therapy affects therapists, both as individuals and as members of their own families.

Read on! We know you'll enjoy the journey.