




# Being-With-Algorithm: Psychotherapists' Lived Experiences of Artificial Intelligence and the Therapeutic Relationship

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the Background section, the statement “psychotherapy is fundamentally grounded in human presence, embodied attunement, and ethical responsibility” is conceptually strong but theoretically under-specified; you should explicitly anchor this claim in a defined theoretical framework (e.g., relational psychoanalysis, phenomenological psychotherapy) rather than leaving it as a broad assertion .

In the Method section, the phrase “Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with practicing psychotherapists” lacks sufficient procedural transparency; the manuscript should specify the exact number of interviews conducted, their duration range, and whether interviews were conducted face-to-face or online in this section rather than elsewhere to ensure methodological clarity .

In the description “Data were analysed idiographically,” the manuscript assumes familiarity with IPA terminology without adequate elaboration; you should briefly operationalize what “idiographic analysis” entailed in practice (e.g., number of coding cycles, use of software, analytic memos) to enhance reproducibility.

In the Reflexivity section, the statement “Reflexive journaling was used throughout” would be strengthened by specifying the timing and structure of these entries (e.g., after each interview, during coding phases), as reflexivity is central to IPA rigor.

In the Findings section, Table 1 presents themes clearly, but the manuscript does not explicitly explain how superordinate themes were distinguished from subordinate themes; a brief methodological clarification is needed before the table.

In Theme 2, the quote “It was as if there was a third colleague in the room” is compelling; however, the manuscript should indicate participant identifiers (e.g., P3, female, 42) to enhance traceability and credibility of qualitative reporting.

In Theme 3, the statement “This raised fears of relational displacement” is an interpretative leap; you should either support it with an additional quote or rephrase it to more closely reflect participants’ actual wording.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the Findings summary, the sentence “therapists did not experience AI merely as a technical tool, but as a relationally and existentially consequential presence” is interpretatively rich but reads as a conclusion rather than a finding; you should support this claim immediately with a representative quote or specify how many participants expressed this view to strengthen evidentiary grounding.

In the Introduction, the statement “Much of this literature... prioritizing symptom reduction, efficiency, and scalability” would benefit from a more balanced critique; consider acknowledging at least one stream of research that has already begun addressing relational or experiential aspects of AI to avoid constructing a straw-man argument.

In the sentence “Therapists are not passive users of technology; they are custodians of relational meaning,” the manuscript introduces a normative stance; you should clarify whether this is an empirical finding, a theoretical assumption, or a value position, as the current phrasing blurs analytic levels.

In the epistemological positioning section, the claim “meaning is not treated as a fixed entity to be discovered” is appropriate for hermeneutic phenomenology but requires citation directly in this sentence; currently, the link to Heidegger and Gadamer is implied rather than explicitly tied to the claim.

In the “Methodological Approach: IPA” section, the numbered justification points (e.g., “Novelty and Complexity of the Phenomenon”) are conceptually sound but stylistically inconsistent with journal expectations; consider integrating them into cohesive paragraphs to maintain formal academic tone.

In the Participants section, the phrase “direct and sustained experience of interacting with AI” is ambiguous; you should operationally define “sustained” (e.g., frequency, duration, or type of interaction) to clarify inclusion criteria.

The sentence “The final sample consisted of eight therapists (five female, three male)” would benefit from additional demographic detail such as years of clinical experience, therapeutic orientation, and familiarity with AI tools, as these variables are highly relevant to interpretative phenomenological findings.

In the Data Collection section, the phrase “Interview questions were designed to...” is followed by bullet-like structure; however, the manuscript guideline explicitly discourages such formatting, and you should convert this into a narrative paragraph to ensure stylistic consistency.

In the Data Analysis Procedure, the sentence “Repeated reading of each transcript to achieve immersion” is methodologically standard but lacks specificity; consider indicating how many readings were conducted or how immersion was documented (e.g., analytic journaling).

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.